

Hafa Adai!

MONDAY DECEMBER 30, 2013

Saipan Tribune

NEWSPAPER



Volume XXIII, Issue No. 258

GOT A **NEWS TIP?**

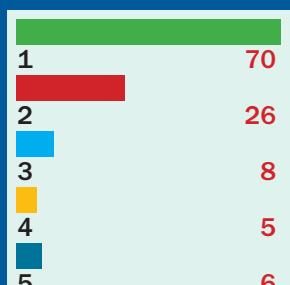
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POLL RESULTS

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how would you rate your level of confidence in the ability of the CNMI government to meet its financial obligations under the NMI Retirement Fund settlement agreement?



Sunday, December 29, 2013

INSIDE

ASIA



A fire engulfs an express train in India, killing at least 26.

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FOCUS



A global retirement crisis is bearing down on workers of all ages.

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LIFE & STYLE



Britney Spears begins her early retirement in Las Vegas.

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75¢

‘Despite many challenges, Rota still pushes through’

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

With 2013 coming to a close, Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola casts an optimistic eye ahead, saying that “despite many

hardships, the Rota community still pushes through.”

Mendiola said the most challenging obstacle the southern island has

» **Rota mayor: Despite hardships, community still pushes through**

wants to accomplish [but] unfortunately

faced is stabilizing its economy.

“There are so many projects that the community

is working on,” he said. “There are so many projects that the community

is working on,” he said.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

“Despite this, Mendiola said they still continue to push through, citing a series of projects and talks involving education, tourism, and commerce that are beginning to take hold.”

See ROTA on Page 4

DoD budget has \$29.3M for divert airfield in NMI

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

President Barack Obama signed into law on Thursday (Friday, CNMI time) the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014 that provides \$29.3 million for the development of a U.S. Air Force divert airfield in the CNMI. The new law also requires the Pentagon to report to Congress by June 25 the feasibility of having a National Guard in the CNMI and American Samoa.

» **Pentagon has 180 days to report feasibility of National Guard in CNMI, A. Samoa**

The defense bill also includes almost \$495 million in spending for military construction projects in Guam.

“Our economy could definitely use

that money,” Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) told *Saipan Tribune*, referring to the \$29.3 million for the development of the airfield.

See BUDGET on Page 4

‘We have to be optimistic in 2014’

» **But CNMI still faces a lot of challenges**

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the year 2013 nearly behind him—and after seeing a leadership change that saw him ascending to the CNMI’s highest office when former governor Benigno R. Fitial stepped down, an improving tourism econ-

omy is still a work in progress.

See OPTIMISTIC on Page 4



Two volunteers of PDM Promotions, Inc. pound glutinous rice to make mochi during Saturday night's Mochitsuki Festival at the Paseo de Marianas as part of the 2013 Christmas in the Marianas celebration. Mochi is a traditional food for the Japanese New Year and is commonly sold and eaten during that time.

MARK RABAGO

Winners of Christmas competitions named. PAGE 2
US: Okinawa base relocation advances Asia emphasis. PAGE 3

Local

Winners of Christmas in the Marianas competitions named

Garapan, Kagman, Koblerville, and San Antonio elementary schools were named winners in a slew of competitions held throughout this month as part of the 2013 Christmas in the Marianas celebration at the Paseo de Marianas.

Garapan Elementary School was a first-timer in this year's Christmas Caroling Competition but that didn't prevent it from dethroning five-time defending champion Koblerville Elementary School in the elementary division.

Koblerville settled for second this year, followed by Mt. Carmel School in third place, Oleai Elementary School in fourth place, Kagman Elementary School in fifth place, and Green Meadow School in sixth place.

In the high school division, Kagman Elementary School won a two-team competition after besting Mt. Carmel School.

Koblerville Elementary School won this year's Float Competition with an entry that fully expressed this year's theme of "Christmas in the Tropics."

Teacher Karen Alla said their float probably bested the competition because of their ingenious use of recycled and indigenous materials.

"We won because of our natural decorations. We used recycled materials like plastic bottles. We also had local fruits in our float. We really wanted to give a 'Christmas in the Tropics' vibe in our float and it worked," she said.

Alla said she and her team of teachers and volunteers from Koblerville's PTA worked for three days round the clock to complete the prize-winning float.

Finishing second was Kagman Elementary School, fol-



MARK RABAGO

Garapan Elementary School students accept the \$1,000 cash prize from Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio and PDM Promoters, Inc. president Misako Awada after the school topped the caroling competition in the elementary division.

lowed by San Vicente Elementary School, Golden Harvest International School, Green Meadow School, Mt. Carmel School, and Oleai Elementary School.

Winners of the Christmas caroling and float competitions were awarded cash prizes by the organizing Marianas Visitors Authority on Saturday.

In the Christmas Tree Decorating Competition, San Antonio Elementary School bested 13 other schools to take home the \$5,000 grand prize.

The school's winning entry is dominated by white-hued Christmas ornaments, topped by a circular and colorful star, and draped by sparkling Christmas lights.

Golden Harvest International School finished second and pocketed the \$3,000 purse,

followed by Dandan Elementary School (\$2,000), Green Meadow School (\$1,000), and Mt. Carmel School and Grace Christian Academy, which finished tied at fourth place and



San Antonio Elementary School's entry to the Christmas Tree Decorating Competition won first place.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Koblerville Elementary School's entry to the Float Competition topped the contest with its ingenious use of recycled and indigenous materials.

split the \$1,000 cash prize.

Koblerville, Oleai, Tanapag, San Vicente, Kagman, Gregorio T. Camacho, and William S. Reyes elementary schools as well as Agape Christian School all got consolation prizes of \$500 each.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio congratulated the winners and thanked all the participants. "We talk about tourism being everybody's business and this is one way for the MVA and our partners such as PDM Promotions, Inc. to get the community involved in celebrating tourism as well as the holidays."

PDM Promotions president Misako Kamata, for her part, said she was happy how the 2013 Christmas in the Marianas turned out, adding that the most difficult part of the entire event was judging the competitions.

"It's very hard to judge and very hard to choose. We really saw the effort of everybody. If we can only give first prize to everybody we would have because everyone was that good," Kamata said.

Tenorio added that the 2013 Christmas in the Marianas activities are in no way finished with Saturday night's Mochitsuki Festival. He said more events were lined up last night and also tonight at the Paseo de Marianas.

"This is our fourth Saturday and we will be extending it and we will also have an event on Sunday and Monday night. We are very happy."

He said the Christmas in the Marianas will only be better each year.

"It's a work in progress but we want it to be one of the most celebrated events, almost like a Taste of the Marianas. It will definitely be back again next year." (Mark Rabago)

MVA Tourism Topics

A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority

Tourism is everybody's business.

Saipan Tinian Rota

HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAA

MVA Meets with Russian Tour Agents

On the heels of the opening of its new office in Russia, the Marianas Visitors Authority met with key tour agents last month in a series of regional sales calls.

The objective of the meetings were to introduce the MVA's team in Vladivostok and share the MVA's East Russia activity plan. The meetings also provided the opportunity to explore opportunities for joint coop promotions, to analyze current product offerings and the potential for further development, and to initiate dialogue with the travel trade industry to stimulate sales and sell the destination.

The MVA found that the awareness of the destination is relatively high; the average trip duration is either 7, 10 or 14 days; and the Northern Marianas is perceived as family-friendly and a quiet, rejuvenating destination.

Key agents met with were VladDiscovery Tour, Lucky Tours, Fregat Aero, Intervoyage, Dialog Narodov-1, Olga, Nadezhda, BusinessIntourService, Gavan Tour Center, Alfa-Tour, Utro Primorya, Berkut, and Double Step Travel.

US: Okinawa base relocation advances Asia emphasis

By TAKEHIKO KAMBAYASHI and
FRANK FUHRIG
DEUTSCHE PRESSE-AGENTUR GMBH

TOKYO—Permission from a Japanese governor to begin work on a new U.S. military base in Okinawa is a “milestone” in Washington’s new emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Friday.

Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima gave the green light earlier Friday for landfill work at the new location of a U.S. military base despite fierce local opposition. However he repeated his own commitment to ridding the island of the base altogether.

The site in northern Okinawa is to replace U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in the center of the island.

In Naha, the capital of Okinawa, about 2,000 people formed a human chain around the prefecture office building to protest the governor’s decision.

The United States and Japan agreed in 1996 to close Futenma and move its operations to a new base at Nago city, but opposition from locals and environmental groups has prevented construction in the environmentally sensitive area.

Hagel said that the new base at Camp Schwab-Henoko Bay would be “a critical part of the realignment of U.S. forces on Okinawa.” He said the permit approval was the “most signif-

cant milestone” so far in long-running efforts to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawans.

“The realignment effort is absolutely critical to the United States’ ongoing rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region and our ability to maintain a geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically sustainable force posture in the region,” Hagel said.

President Barack Obama has touted a shift in U.S. political, military and trade priorities toward Asia, with its fast-growing economies and China as a rising, potential rival superpower.

“Our alliance has helped underwrite regional peace, stability, and prosperity for more than half a century,” said Hagel, without mentioning China.

Nakaima denied that a boost in public money from Tokyo for the prefecture would be linked to its support for the new base. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has promised economic stimulus to Okinawa worth about \$2.9 billion every year through 2021.

Announcing his authorization for work to start, the governor told reporters, “I have not changed my pledge” to move

the base off the island, a position he has held for three years.

When a reporter pointed to the apparent contradiction, he responded that the priority was to close the current site, located near residential areas.

“What’s important here is to move the dangerous air base out of the city as soon as possible,” he said.

Washington and Tokyo believed it would take nearly 10 years to build the new base, he said: “But I believe it will take longer.”

Hagel noted that some Marines are being relocated to Guam and other Pacific bases.

“Moving forward with this plan will reduce our footprint in the most populated part of Okinawa and let us return significant land south of Kadena Air Base, while sustaining U.S. military capabilities vital to the

peace and security of the region,” he said.

Experts pointed out that Friday’s decision does not actually start construction.

“I don’t believe the base will be built, because of massive opposition in Okinawa,” said political science professor Akiyuki Hashimoto, an expert on U.S.-Japanese relations at JF Oberlin University.

Relations between locals and

the base’s 18,000 personnel are tense. The 1995 rape of a schoolgirl by U.S. Marines inflamed residents’ resentment.

Nakaima, a former bureaucrat, at first supported the plan for a relocation away from the town, but then called for the base to be moved off Okinawa in an about-face that helped him get re-elected in 2010.

After the end of the occupation of Japan in 1952, Okinawa remained under US military control until 1972. The U.S. military used the island as a base during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

In Ginowan, site of the current Futenma base, resident Shinji Gima was quoted by the Kyodo News agency as saying he and others were “fearful” of accidents and crimes by U.S. military personnel, but that he could not welcome the relocation of the facility to Nago.

“The base will just be moved from one place to another within Okinawa,” he said.

U.S. troops on Okinawa

The delayed relocation of a U.S. air station on the Japanese island of Okinawa has been approved, despite opposition from local leaders.



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King found using illegal drugs again

Kisha Lyn Masga King, a woman who was originally sentenced to three years of probation for her role in a conspiracy to pass off fake bills in stores, was summoned to the federal court again to explain why her probation should not be revoked for allegedly using illegal drugs.

The U.S. Marshal Service summoned King on Friday to appear in the U.S. District Court for the NMI today, Monday, at 3pm for a revocation hearing.

U.S. Probation Officer Gregory Arriola told the court Friday that King has not complied with the condition of her probation as she admitted to using marijuana and methamphetamine or "ice" on Nov. 8, 2013.

Arriola said that King also failed to comply with the sub-

stance abuse testing program requirement by submitting tampered specimens on eight separate occasions from Nov. 2 to Dec. 13, 2013.

Last Nov. Nov. 8, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona slapped King with a two-day prison sentence for violating her probation.

Upon her release, King was to serve a 22-month supervised release, during which she will be required to participate in a substance abuse program and refrain from using illegal drugs and any alcoholic beverages. She is prohibited from entering poker or game arcades.

King's probation has been revoked several times for using illegal drugs and other violations. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

BUDGET

From Page 1

Development of a divert airfield in the CNMI.

The divert airfield is intended to be an alternative landing base for Air Force planes if Andersen Air Force Base in Guam becomes unavailable because of weather or war.

Sablan worked with the U.S. House Armed Services Committee to place some limits on the Air Force, because there is still a question about where to put this facility: on Tinian or Saipan.

"I think that Northern Marianas officials decided long ago that Tinian would be the preferred location for military expansion in the Northern Marianas, but the Air Force has other ideas. So, at my request, the Committee report directs the Air Force to work with the governor to find a mutually agreeable resolution to this siting issue," Sablan said.

The delegate added that the Air Force is also barred from spending any of the \$29.3 million until it reports to Congress on all the alternatives that have been considered, the overall construction requirements, and the cost/benefits of options for the land needed.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos said last week that the CNMI remains unified in its voice to have a divert airfield on Tinian where two-thirds of lands are already leased to the U.S. Department of Defense, instead of Saipan where the U.S. military had planned on placing it.

The governor told the Air Force that its request to lease 33 acres of land on Saipan for the next 50 years "is quite an undesirable conclusion as it would impede future commercial development in the area."

H.R. 3304 or the 2014 NDAA also moves the Commonwealth toward possibly having its own National Guard.

DoD now has 180 days to report to Congress on the feasibility of having the CNMI's own National Guard, just like Guam and all of the other states and territories, except American Samoa.

"We have 16 of our people deployed with the Guam National Guard—and returning safely home soon. So, clearly, there is an interest. But do we have enough people for a full Guard unit? Do we have the needed infrastructure? Will our local legislature support establishing a Northern Marianas National Guard? These are the questions the report will answer. And we should know by June 25," Sablan said.

Sablan introduced legislation in 2011 to set up a CNMI unit of the National Guard.

Besides the CNMI-specific provisions, the annual Defense authorization makes some other changes worth noting.

Sablan said military personnel will be getting a 1-percent raise.

"And the new law addresses the issue of sexual assault in the military, which is a problem that seems to be increasing and puts anyone in the armed service—men and women—including our people from the Northern Marianas, at risk. The new law bars commanders from overturning jury convictions in assault cases; and it mandates honorable discharge for anyone convicted—all steps in the right direction," he said.

Obama, in a statement, said the defense measure is a "welcome step" toward closing Guantanamo Bay prison.

"The detention facility at Guantanamo continues to impose significant costs on the American people. I am encouraged that this Act provides the Executive greater flexibility to transfer Guantanamo detainees abroad, and look forward to working with Congress to take the additional steps needed to close the facility," the president said.

OPTIMISTIC

From Page 1

my, and a bigger push toward improving the immigration status of long-term foreign workers—Gov. Eloy S. Inos said the Commonwealth will still be facing a lot of challenges in 2014. But he said there's always room for optimism.

Inos, marking his 10th month as CNMI governor, said he has seen an increase in peoples' confidence in themselves, in the economy, and in their government.

"We have to be optimistic," he told *Saipan Tribune*. "I am more optimistic in 2014."

With a steady climb in tourist arrivals, capital improvement projects moving along and the release of over \$40 million in CNMI Retirement Fund contributions to members, the local economy has seen some reprieve after years of stagnation.

But the governor also acknowledges that the 25-percent cut in retirees' pension has also made a dent in peoples' buying power.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), for his part, thinks that "all of us should keep our eyes on the future and work on building a better home here for ourselves and our families."

"We have elections coming up in November [2014], which will give us a chance to get some fresh, new thinking into our local legislature. There are young-

ROTA

From Page 1

ning to bear fruit.

A good example is the road construction in the northern part of the island that leads to the Bird Sanctuary—a prime tourist destination. Although the paved cement road will not reach the actual site due to a funding shortfall, it will cover most of the road leading to it. Mendiola considers this a major accomplishment by his office.

The Office of the Mayor also recently opened its Aquaponic Education and Training Center, which aims to educate the Rota community on alternative ways to grow and harvest crops. The center was made possible by a \$260,000 grant from the Department of the Interior. Mendiola said he wants to bring the aquaponics center into people's backyards as a way to raise revenue. *See story on Page 8*

"This will really help our people in so many ways," he added.

A feasibility study for the Rota east harbor has also been concluded. He said the study has determined that the harbor is feasible as an alternate point of entry for ships to offload their cargo. Cargo ships going

er people out there, educated, experienced, who can help us move forward. And I would encourage them to run for office and start taking over the responsibilities of leadership," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Members of the current CNMI Legislature said they will continue to come up with revenue-generating bills that will restore the 25-percent pension cut and address the government's increasing obligations, including making annual remittance to the Retirement Settlement Fund and a 40-percent increase in government health insurance premium.

The CNMI has yet to reap the benefits of revenue-generating bills that recently became law, including video lottery and electronic gaming.

"Despite budget challenges and so forth, we're able to do many things still for the community. We got new projects that have been rolled out, especially road projects, many of the other capital improvements are currently now undergoing A&E, which is kind of a soft part of the overall project development plan. Once the architectural-engineering plans are in place, that's when we actually see new constructions coming up," Inos said.

At least two new hotels with at least 200 rooms each are expected to be built in San Antonio and Marpi in 2014, to help accommodate a growing number of tourists to the islands.

to Rota currently use the west harbor, which often has rough waters, delaying the delivery of commodities.

Mendiola shared that the administration is now looking into developing the port and has yet to determine when the project will start. He said his office will work closely with the Commonwealth Ports Authority, which is conducting its own feasibility study on the harbor.

"We will see what is going to happen because right now one of the requirements is the size of the vessels," he said.

A ferry service from Rota to Guam and back is also in the planning process with his administration and government officials in Guam. Mendiola said the service will "allow an alternative and probably more reliable mode of transportation."

Education is also something that the Rota government is prioritizing, according to Mendiola.

Although education is not something directly under the mayor's administration, it is something that they "support and provide for." He shared that several of his staff continue to assist local schools because of the lack of personnel at both private and public educational facilities. He was also able to convince a Japanese investor

"We still have challenges. We still don't know how we're going to resolve the issues with the military," the governor added.

For example, the CNMI has been calling for the development of a U.S. Air Force divert airfield on Tinian and not on Saipan as the military has been planning on.

The use of Pagan and Tinian for the U.S. military's live-fire training is also a contentious issue.

"Pagan really needs some extensive public debate, and the Tinian installation," he said.

As for the Retirement Fund, the governor said, "What we need to do now is to concentrate on funding the annual minimum guaranteed payments."

"But we can take comfort over the fact that we look at a smaller number and not the usual \$300 million that's over our head every day that we come into office. So at least with the settlement agreement, the whole issue with retirement is now manageable," he added.

Delegate Sablan expects "2014 will continue to be very challenging" in Washington, D.C.

"But there are important issues still to be resolved, so I am looking forward to the coming year. We will be going right back to work on the Farm Bill in January. Appropriations for 2014 need to be finished, then we start working on spending for 2015," he said.

Sablan said he is going to

to contribute \$10,000 worth of scholarship every year for honor students who graduate.

"We have worked together several times and are looking forward to more opportunities to get our youth educated," he said.

One thing the Rota Mayor's Office is currently working on is the development of a trade school so that "we can start utilizing our local resources and manpower." He noted that the Northern Marianas College has been working with his administration to set up the trade school.

"We want our people to be certified and qualified to work on certain positions, not only for us here in Rota but also all over the world," he said.

Tourism and island beautification is also something the Rota government has checked off on its agenda. Several public pavilions recently received a facelift.

"We have painted and restored almost all of the pavilions around the island that service the locals and tourists alike."

The island's prime destinations for community events, the Rota Round House and Chamorro Village recently got new permanent stages where student activities, ceremonies, and fiestas will be held.

Mendiola admits that the is-

keep working with the U.S. Department of Labor on extending the immigration transition period, and improving training for the local workers to get into the labor force.

"In the Education and the Workforce Committee, child nutrition is up for reauthorization; there's more to do on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. And our omnibus territories bill is moving forward in the Senate. I will be working very hard over the next 12 months in every way I can for the people I represent in Congress and to make life better in the Northern Marianas Islands. But whatever I have done has been with the help of others and so, looking forward to 2014, I want to say thank you and ask everyone for their continued support," Sablan added.

If the CNMI's request to grant the transition period beyond Dec. 31, 2014, is denied, the islands will lose some 10,000 foreign workers. The government and the private sector see an economic collapse when all 10,000 foreign workers leave at a time when only a few thousand U.S. workers are available in the CNMI to take over the jobs that will be vacated.

The year 2014 will also be a general election in the CNMI, wherein voters will elect the governor, lieutenant governor, lawmakers and others. It will also be the first time that an attorney general will be elected.

land needs more sites for tourists to visit, which will result in longer stays.

"We need to give our tourists a greater reason to stay longer. We must expand our tourist destinations and eco-tourism so that they can enjoy more activities," he added.

One project that is in the works is the "360-degree panoramic view" of the island. Mendiola said a land survey has already been conducted and this new project will be built on the islands highest point, Mt. Sabana.

With the year coming to a close, Mendiola has only one message: "In this time of the year there is only one message. It is about the coming of Jesus. It is about love. We must build up our senses in opening ourselves to one another and understand one another and be a greater, more peaceful community."

Mendiola asked of the Rota community for their understanding regarding the economic situation the island is facing. He remains optimistic about the year 2014 and prays for more economic activity.

"I hope that we will pass this [the economic crisis] so that we can have better air to breath in. It is important for us to help each other. It takes the entire community."

‘Termination of privileges is final’

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

More than a month after the hospital's former orthopedic surgeon appealed for reconsideration, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has yet to take any action on his appeal and stands by its decision to terminate the doctor's medical privileges at the Commonwealth Health Center.

Corporation interim CEO Esther Muña confirmed Friday that the governing body—composed of herself, the director for medical affairs, and the chief financial officer—did not respond to Dr. Grant Walker's request to withdraw the termination notice issued to him and his demand for an apology from the body.

“We're not discussing the issue because we're not reopening the case. The decision was made and we stand by our decision,” Muña said, adding that the decision is final.

Through his then-lawyer Daniel Quidotti, Walker spe-

Insurance premium hike means more cost-cutting, revenue-generating bills

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Eloy S. Inos cancelled on Friday a request for proposals for a government health insurance program and a new one may be issued soon, even as retirees, public servants and the government itself brace for a 40-percent increase in health insurance premium under an up to 60-day contract extension with current provider Aetna International.

The governor, at the same time, issued an RFP last week for a group life insurance coverage.

The additional millions of dollars that the government may have to pay as a result of a 40-percent hike in health insurance premiums will mean more cost-cutting measures and revenue-generating bills, lawmakers said yesterday.

“Locally-funded travel will have to be cut by 50 percent. Giving the Department of Finance more authority to enforce the Sales Receipts Act will generate additional revenues that can be used to pay for the increased health insurance premiums,” Rep. Christopher Leon Guerrero (Cov-Saipan) told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Rep. Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), however, said the administration should not resort to work hour cuts again “because there are still other areas where we can cut like not giving salary increases, stop more hiring especially on an election year [2014].”

“The 40-percent premium

specifically demanded on Nov. 27 that the termination notice be withdrawn and an apology be accorded him. He sought for a response within 14 days.

Muña confirmed receipt of the appeal from the doctor's counsel, but said this never reached the governing body's table for discussion.

CHCC hired Walker from Idaho to serve as the hospital's orthopedic surgeon for 30 days. But prior to the contract expiration, the body terminated his medical privileges due to a host of issues, including alleged unprofessional conduct and insubordination, among other issues. Medical privilege allows a physician to use the facilities of a hospital for surgeries and operation. Losing this privilege means a doctor—whether in public or private clinics—cannot operate or provide services to his clients. Walker is now back in Idaho.

In an email to *Saipan Tribune*, Walker said he is counting on the corporation's board of trustees to consider his case.

Yesterday, CHCC board chair Joaquin Torres confirmed that he is looking into the issue. “It's under the board's review now,” Torres said. “This is only fair and it is the least we can do to make things right if mistakes were made.”

He refused to further comment.

Walker said that he wanted to come back to the island and serve in the private sector or the public hospital. However, without a medical privilege to use the CHC's facilities, he cannot perform operations on his clients. He is also appealing to the governor to consider his appeal.

“I respectfully ask Gov. [Eloy] Inos to make good on his intent with Executive Order

2013-11 and bring me back on a 90-day contract, thus restoring orthopedic emergency services

to CHCC. Without an operating room I am ineffective as a surgeon,” he added.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Division of Public Health Services employees have their picture taken at their 2013 Quarterly Professional Development Day on Dec. 22, 2013, which highlighted the division's accomplishments in 2013 and their goals for 2014.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Fund: Aetna extension will allow the govt to look for a better deal

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
 moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
 REPORTER

Following disclosure last week by Gov. Eloy S. Inos of the contract extension of Aetna International, the firm that handles the health insurance coverage of government personnel and retirees, the NMI Retirement Fund on Friday bared that the new agreement will extend the contract by up to 60 days to allow the administration to negotiate an affordable health insurance policy for all enrollees. However, because of the rising cost of health care, the extension also comes with a 40-percent increase in premiums," Pangelinan said in her letter Friday.

She said that Aetna will hold off on issuing the January billing until it can effectuate the appropriate system changes and anticipates the billing to be out in mid-January.

"At this time, the government is still working on how to implement the premium changes for the extension period, including how the costs will be shared between the government and the enrollees, therefore enrollees should not see an increase in their premiums until this change is effectuated," added Pangelinan.

The Group Health Life Insurance Program is a benefit program of the government that is administered by the Retirement Fund. For many years, Aetna International has been servicing the members' health insurance coverage while Individual Assurance Company takes care of the life coverage. Both contracts will expire on Dec. 31.

Early this month, the government issued separate RFPs, or requests for proposal, for both policies. For the health coverage, only two firms submitted bids, one of which later cancelled. Aetna is not among any of the two initial proposers.

According to Pangelinan, the RFP for health policy was officially cancelled on Dec. 27 after it was determined that the RFP submissions were not in the best interest of the CNMI.

"To ensure all active CNMI government employees and retirees continue to have health-care coverage, the CNMI government and GHLIP entered

into an agreement with Aetna International to extend the current insurance policy for up to an additional 60 days. This extension will allow the government to negotiate an affordable health insurance policy for all enrollees. However, because of the rising cost of health care, the extension also comes with a 40-percent increase in premiums," Pangelinan said in her letter Friday.

She said that Aetna will hold off on issuing the January billing until it can effectuate the appropriate system changes and anticipates the billing to be out in mid-January.

"At this time, the government is still working on how to implement the premium changes for the extension period, including how the costs will be shared between the government and the enrollees, therefore enrollees should not see an increase in their premiums until this change is effectuated," added Pangelinan.

Aetna had agreed last year to a reduction of 18.31 percent for the one-year coverage of members for 2013. Fund records show that there are approximately 2,400 individuals who benefit from the health coverage plan.

It was revealed that there are 1,078 members who are enrolled in the policy as employees who are paying \$350.28 per annum at present. For an employee with one dependent, the present rate is \$718.06; there are 804 enrolled under this category.

For those in the family category, the rate is \$1,120.87; there are 500 members enrolled in this category.

The 2013 policy brought the government substantial savings of \$339,644 monthly—or \$4.075 million in the 12-month period. The health insurance coverage is paid 50-50 share by the government and employee.

'New CUC rate hike will put Dynasty's survival to the test'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The only casino-hotel operating on the island of Tinian will face another major challenge in its operation, this time with the anticipated rate hike in utilities.

Tom Liu, general manager of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, is appealing to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission to carefully evaluate the proposed increases being asked by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Besides the rate hike, CUC also wants to impose revised or new fees on non-rate charges. A decision on many of these issues will be known after the commission's regulatory meeting next month.

Saipan Tribune learned that Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino has been a CUC customer since 1998. Throughout those years, Liu said, the company experienced many rate hikes that affected the facility's operation. In those times, the hotel managed to sustain its operation and survived.

But this may not be the same this time around, Liu said.

"Over the years, we have

done everything possible to reduce utility usage to the extent of causing inconveniences to hotel guests by turning off corridor air-conditioning, turning off lobby air-conditioning from 10pm to 7am, and shutting down certain elevators when occupancies were low," disclosed Liu.

The hotel also replaced all its light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs and even reduced the size of the casino to a third of its original size—again to conserve energy.

"We even turned off the hotel signages at the entrance [of the building] to save on utility costs, causing many guests [to wonder] whether we are still open for business as they don't see any hotel signages lighted anymore," Liu added.

Liu disclosed that Dynasty's utility rates increased from .16 cents per kWh to the current .47 cents per kWh.

With the proposed rate increase, Dynasty is facing another rate hike of 20 percent—which means its current rate will go up by as much as .56 cents per kWh.

Liu disclosed that the hotel's

average utility bill each month is around \$300,000—equivalent to \$10,000 per day consumption.

"The anticipated increase of

almost 20 percent will mean \$360,000 per month! We are not in any financial position to pay such a huge utility bill and we cannot continue to in-

convenience our guests. How much revenue do we need to generate to afford that utility bill?" he asked.

According to Liu, unlike ho-

tel on Saipan, Tinian Dynasty is not allowed to use its own generators to generate its power needs. "We are not competing on equal grounds with hotels on Saipan. This is on top of additional costs for shipping and wharfage charges of business on Tinian," added Liu.

In his appeal to the CPUC, he said: "Any more increases in rates will have a devastating financial consequence to our survival to continue operation."

Dog found

A Good Samaritan found a dog wandering along Tun Juaquin Doi Road in As Lito around 5pm to 6pm last night. The owner of the dog should call 234-2316 and bring a photo of the lost dog for verification.

Man who threw rocks at a party gets 1 year in prison

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo has imposed a one-year prison sentence on a man who, while drunk, threw rocks at a birthday party in Garapan where there were some children.

At a hearing last week, Marco W. Selepeo Fitial, 33, pleaded guilty to assault with a dangerous weapon as part of a plea deal.

Govendo sentenced Fitial to five years in prison, all suspended except for one year, to be served without the possibility of parole, early release, or weekend release.

Fitial was given credit for 98 days of time served. He is expected to be released on Sept. 16, 2014.

After serving his sentence, Fitial will be placed on five years' probation.

Fitial was required to pay \$1,023.43 in restitution to the owner of a 2007 Toyota Yaris that was damaged in the attack.

He was also ordered to pay a \$100 fine, \$100 court assess-

ment, and \$500 probation fee.

The Office of the Attorney General had charged Fitial with three counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, one count of criminal mischief, four counts of disturbing the peace, and one count of criminal contempt.

Fitial and his counsel, the Office of the Public Defender, signed a plea deal with assistant attorney general Chemere K. McField. For pleading guilty to one count of assault with a dangerous weapon, the government agreed to dismiss the remaining charges.

According to the information filed by Chief Prosecutor Shelli Neal, Fitial approached the Casa De Felipe Apartment complex on July 25, 2013 on Saipan, and started an altercation with residents who were having a get-together. He then picked up five large rocks and threw them at the residents, causing damage to a vehicle.

Police said that Fitial, who appeared drunk, had been invited to eat but after eating, he threw his trash on the table, scattering the food.

Sobriety checkpoints tomorrow

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints on Dec. 31, 2013.

■ 5pm to 6:15pm: Beach Road Chalan Piao in front of Hopwood Jr. High School on the southbound lane.

■ 9:30pm to 10:45pm: Chalan Monsignor Guerrero, Chalan Kiya by the CUC Waterloo on the southbound lane.

■ 11:30pm-12:45am: Chalan

Family grief support meeting on Jan. 2

A group that is in the process of forming a Compassionate Friends chapter on Saipan will be holding their monthly grief support meeting on Thursday, Jan. 2, from 6pm to 7:30pm, in the NMPASI conference room on Middle Road, in Gualo Rai.

We offer understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who are grieving the loss of a child of any age, and from any cause. We provide a safe, confidential setting, in which to share our experiences,

while respecting and supporting each other, and listening. We have "been there." We do not espouse any specific religious or philosophical ideology. There is no "right way" to grieve, and family members are welcome to come to share or just to listen.

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others to be supportive. Today

more than 600 chapters serving all 50 states plus Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam offer friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents and other family members during the natural grieving process after a child has died.

For more information, call Jill Derickson at 287-5337 or e-mail jill@pticom.com. To learn more about The Compassionate Friends, visit their website at www.compassionatefriends.org. (PR)



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Rota's aquaponic center aims to teach community

By THOMAS MANGLONA
CORRESPONDENT

The new Rota Aquaponic Education and Training Center that opened on Rota in July is where "hydroponic and aquaculture become one," according to Jack Igisair, a Department of Lands and Natural Resources employee.

The center holds over 200 white and blue tilapia, whose waste provides nutrients for the variety of crops being grown there: taro, white ginger, corn, tomatoes, bell pepper, eggplant, Chinese cabbage, green onions, pineapples, and cucumber.

Igisair explained that the fish are the main concern in a com-

bined hydroponic and aquaculture system and the new center combines aspects of both methods of growing crops and fish.

Under this method, crops and fish are both raised in a recirculating system. Using gravity to its advantage, water is drained from the fish tank and brought to the "beds" where the plants are and the waste-rich in nutrients—flow through the bed and fertilize the roots of the plants. The solid waste is filtered by the plants' roots and the water is recycled back into the fish tank.

Igisair shared that on a normal day all he needs to do is to check on the plants, feed the fish, and make sure that

the water's pH level stays between 6.8 and 7.

Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola told *Saipan Tribune* in a separate interview that the center was made possible by a \$260,000 grant through the U.S. Department of the Interior and has had five local resident certified to teach and run the program.

Mendiola said his office, along with DLNR, departments of Commerce and Public Works, and NMC-CREES, plan to bring the science of the Aquaponics Center into people's back yards and hopefully bring it to a commercial level.

Igisair took care of the center

last Friday on his own but alternates shifts every week with the others who participated in a four-month training program in Hawaii: Gus Maratita, Harry Mendiola, David Calvo, and Jimmy Apatang.

The center is open in Sinapalo five days a week from 7:30am to 4:30pm.

"Anyone can come anytime and we can teach them. We also provide technical assistance. Our main goal is to show the people that we can build a system with low electricity," Igisair said.

How much electricity exactly? Just enough to light a light bulb.



DLNR's Jack Igisair harvests one of the crops at the Aquaponic Center in Sinapalo, Rota.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II



DLNR's Jack Igisair checks on tomato crops growing on the flow bed.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II



The fish tank where 200 white and blue tilapias are being raised.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 30, 2005

Bankruptcies soar to 31

Bankruptcy cases filed in federal court this year have soared to an all-time high of 31, records at the U.S. District Court for the NMI show. The 2005 bankruptcy petitions of 31 "erased" the previous record of 25 cases that were registered in 2001 and again in 2002. This year the petitioners were all individuals who filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases, based on a check by the Saipan Tribune of court records yesterday. Among the petitioners was a former official of the administration of then Gov. Froilan Tenorio. Under Bankruptcy Chapter 7, most assets of the debtor are liquidated as quickly as possible to pay off his creditors to the extent possible and to free the debtor to start anew.

Streamlined land development plan eyed

The first directive that Gov.-elect Benigno R. Fitial signs when he takes office in January may well be the creation of a task force that will streamline the permit application process for land development in the Commonwealth. A draft directive was presented yesterday at a meeting among Fitial's transition committee, the CNMI's regulatory agencies, the outgoing administration, and the private sector. The proposed directive, which will establish a land development task force, has been tentatively scheduled to become effective on Jan. 10, 2006—the day following Fitial's inauguration.

December 30, 2006

College licensing question go on '07 ballot

At least one question will be posed to the voters in the November 2007 midterm election—whether to establish a separate licensing agency for higher educational institutions. This comes after the Legislature passed an initiative that would strip the Northern Marianas College of its licensing power over privately owned postsecondary educational institutions. Currently, the NMC Board of Regents, which also serves as the State Board of Regents, has full authority over all higher educational institutions in the Commonwealth. NMC is the CNMI's only government funded college.

Dragon offers giveaways in promo

Fire crackers don't have to be expensive, especially when the economy is bad, says Franco Hui, general manager of Dragon Firecrackers. So this year the company has come up with generous savings promo for customers: lower prices on select items (from 50 to 90 percent) and several giveaways such as iPods, MP3 players, DVD players, table clocks, calculators, and many others. "We want people to enjoy and still celebrate New Year's with firecrackers. People still need to celebrate, and it's not complete without fireworks. It's our tradition. We want that possible for everyone so we lowered our prices," he said. Besides the reduced prices, Dragon Fireworks, which has recently adopted a new slogan "King of Power," also offers a buy-1-get- three-free promo.

December 30, 2007

House caps govt's retirement share

Legislation capping the government retirement contribution rate at 18 percent barely passed the House of Representatives Friday. House members voted 14-1 to approve the latest version of Senate 15-105. The bill is now headed to the Senate. But the House passage did not come easy. The initial vote was 13-1. Rep. Absalon Waki voted against the bill and Rep. Ray Yumul abstained, leaving the bill one vote short of the required three-fourths of the House members.

Extended sale of alcohol on New Year's OK'd

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has authorized the sale of alcoholic beverages beyond the 2am cutoff for the New Year's Day festivities. These extended hours are only for the evening of Sunday, Dec. 31, 2007 until 4am on Monday, Jan. 1, 2008. In accordance with 4 CMC Section 5556, Fitial through the Secretary of Commerce gave special notice to all Class-3 Retail Dealer On-Sale establishments (licensees) that the hours to sell and serve alcoholic beverages are extended on these dates. In observance of the National Drugged and Drunk Driving Prevention Month, all establishments that sell alcoholic beverages are urged to exercise responsible alcohol services and shall encourage their patrons to drink alcohol responsibly during the extended hours of operation.

EPA, former owner of Shell Marianas end consent decree

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. government, on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Pro-

tection Agency, and the former owner of Shell Marianas now want to terminate the consent decree that resolved EPA's lawsuit against the company for violations of the Clean Air Act at a bulk gasoline terminal on Saipan.

EPA now agrees that Marianas Acquisition Corp. has met the requirements to have the

consent decree terminated.

U.S. Department of Justice Environmental Enforcement Section trial attorney Andrew W. Ingersoll, assistant U.S. at-

torneys Mikel W. Schwab and Jessica F. Cruz, and IP&E Saipan legal counsel Paul O. Dicharry on behalf of MAC, submitted in federal court on Thursday a joint stipulation and motion to terminate the consent decree.

The parties said that pursuant to a provision of the consent decree, MAC completed its vapor collection system installation project and submitted performance tests to EPA.

MAC also submitted semi-annual reports to EPA pursuant to the consent decree.

MAC also agrees to pay \$826,000 in civil penalties for past violations and install emissions control equipment worth \$2.3 million.

Ingersoll stated that the settlement reduces emissions of volatile organic compounds, in-

cluding the known human carcinogen benzene, from MAC's bulk gasoline storage facility in Puerto Rico.

Senior District Judge Alex R. Munson accepted the consent decree.

In March 2011, EPA announced the settlement of the case. According to the complaint filed simultaneously with the settlement, MAC, previously doing business as Shell Marianas, failed for more than two decades to install vapor pollution controls and comply with a pollution limit at its bulk gasoline terminal loading area in Puerto Rico.

Failure to limit its emissions led to the illegal discharge of about 5 tons of volatile organic compounds into the air each year, EPA said.

Little Miss Pusong Pinoy to highlight UFO Valentine event

The United Filipino Association will once again hold its signature Valentine's Day event with the staging of yet another Pusong Pinoy festivity on Feb. 16 at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

UFO president Annamae Adaza said the celebration's centerpiece will be the Little Miss Pusong Pinoy 2013 pageant.

"[At] every UFO event, we try to give different entertainment to the CNMI community, we [want] people from all

walks of life to get involved with our activities. Like last February we had the Miss Pusong Pinoy for teenagers, then for the month of June during the *Pistang Pinoy* we had the Super Model for Gays, then for this month of December for *Paskong Pinoy* we had the That's My Tomboy, and now it's about time to give a chance to young kids who will vie for the title of Little Miss Pusong Pinoy 2013," she said.

To this end, UFO is looking for contestants with ages

ranging from 6 to 9 to compete in the pageant. They will be competing for Best in Talent, Best in Evening Gown, question-and-answer portion, along some special categories like Darling of the Crowd, Star of the Night, Miss Friendship, and Miss Photogenic.

Winners will receive cash prizes of \$800 for first place, \$500 for second, \$300 for third, and \$100 for fourth place.

The Top 4 will also get gift packs, certificates of participation, and a sash and a bouquet

of flowers, while non-winners will receive consolation cash prizes, gift packs, and certificates of participation.

Application forms for the Little Miss Pusong Pinoy 2013 will be available soon and UFO will be requiring a copy of participants' birth certificates.

To register, call or text Adaza at 483-5237, UFO secretary Mario Mayuga at 285-1021, or event director/coordinator Ernie Molina at 789-8212.

The deadline for registration will be on Jan. 15, 2014. (Mark Rabago)

North's Best Burger a big hit

The North's Best Burger of Mariana Resort and Spa's 12th Night Restaurant has been selling like hotcakes lately.

Executive chef William Retardo said they currently average 20-30 orders a day and his kitchen works overtime to accommodate the demand for the burger, which is the creation of 2013 Taste of Marianas Chef Competition winner Emmanuel Pancha.

The earthy—because of the plentiful mushrooms—North's Best Burger was the hand's down favorite of their sampling team, which included Retardo, and it was the entry they submitted to the 2013 Taste of Marianas Chef Competition.

The North's Best Burger is available at 12th Night Restaurant of Mariana Resort. For reservations, call 322-0770. (Mark Rabago)

North's Best Burger is only \$12, inclusive of your choice

of beverage and a side order of French fries.

The 45-year-old Pancha, who has worked as a cook at the Marianas Resort for 18 years and was also the winner of the inaugural Top Chef Competition a year ago, said he and his fellow chef, Richard Miemban, concocted the recipe in a span of a few days and involved three sample burgers.

The earthy—because of the plentiful mushrooms—North's Best Burger was the hand's down favorite of their sampling team, which included Retardo, and it was the entry they submitted to the 2013 Taste of Marianas Chef Competition.

The North's Best Burger is available at 12th Night Restaurant of Mariana Resort. For reservations, call 322-0770. (Mark Rabago)

North's Best Burger is only \$12, inclusive of your choice



MARK RABAGO

Mariana Resort and Spa sous chef Emmanuel Pancha with his North's Best Burger.

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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXIII, Issue No. 258

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

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AP The Associated Press

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EDITORIAL

Does a college degree lead to good jobs and happiness? Or to debt and regret?

Higher education is one of the more expensive investments many people will ever make. The average cost of a year in college, including tuition, fees, room and board, now runs about \$23,000—enough to buy a new car. Graduates typically leave with \$30,000 each in student loan debt.

But cost is just one thing that deserves to be considered when young people decide whether and where to go. Another is what they get for their money. That's harder to measure, and it's not something that can be reduced to a dollar figure.

A school that offers mediocre instruction or demands too little of students may leave them poorly equipped for the real world even though they have diplomas. Most people hope a college education will help them get a good job. But universities have a broader and deeper mission than that. Reading Shakespeare is valuable even if it doesn't strengthen your resume.

Fortunately, someone has decided to try to figure out what people get out of college, in both tangible and intangible ways. The Gallup polling organization and Purdue University have unveiled a project to survey college grads to find out how they're doing.

Gallup Chairman Jim Clifton and Purdue President Mitch Daniels write in The Wall Street Journal that the survey will ask college graduates questions like: "Are you employed? How much do you earn? It will also measure those critical qualities that Gallup finds employers truly value and are predictive of work success: a person's workplace engagement and well-being."

It will also inquire about community involvement, personal relationships and physical well-being. Purdue will commission a separate survey of its own alumni to see how they are doing and how they compare with other college graduates. The first results, based on a sampling of 30,000 people, should be out in the spring.

"We owe it to potential students, we owe it to businesses who might recruit our students, to be able to say something with statistical confidence about the quality of our graduates," says Daniels, who previously exercised his iconoclastic bent as the reform-oriented governor of Indiana.

This knowledge can only be helpful to youngsters and their parents who are making decisions of huge importance for their careers. It also promises to be a spur to schools to learn how their graduates are doing and what professors and administrators can do to improve their professional outcomes. The published data will even allow conferences to compare themselves with others. Can the Southeastern Conference excel in this realm as it does in football?

But more than money and career are relevant. The survey is designed to tell colleges whether they are helping their students achieve the worthwhile, rewarding lives they seek.

"What Gallup is measuring is well-being, and that in the end is the purpose of a college education, especially in a democracy—pursuit of happiness is the bottom line," Anthony Carnevale, director of Georgetown University's Center of Education and the Workforce, told The Chronicle of Higher Education. "If college serves these other purposes—that is, it allows you to live more fully—that is not unimportant."

See COLLEGE on Next Page



Dusting off the year that was

It started yesterday, the white puffs flurrying down like feathers from medieval angels molting from the stratosphere. It was not much but enough to make my foothold on the icy ground a bit shaky while I carried the potted plants from my classroom after my last class session. The school shuts off the radiator on the last day of the semester until the spring semester opens. That's eight weeks in the cold that even the sturdy spider plants could not possibly endure.

I carried my plants in one of those oversized shopping bags that boutiques like to provide. I live only about four blocks from my classroom so I did not bother to bring plastic or towel to cover the plants. But after 15 minutes outside in between warm rooms, the plants resembled weeklong leeks in the fridge, or newly harvested kelp from the icy waters, all desperately crying out to be cooked and consumed, or be thrown away. After two more trips, half of my study/living room now looks like a solarium of the Chicago botanical garden.

This dusting off exercise in our mind is not, however, our wilting in the Dong Bei cold, a consequence of retirement from the formal teaching service. Rather, it rehearses my markings and turning points of the past year.

I am a historical figure, by upbringing and choice. I love history—the facts-based reminiscing of the past so that the future does not come as too much of a scare nor a surprise. I no longer live the present with fear of the unknown, cowed and resigned; history gives me the confidence to live each day like it was the only day of the rest of my life! At every moment, I encounter the past, present, and the future, all at once!

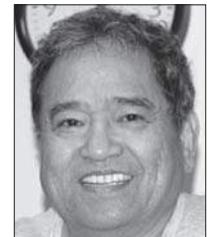
But my gray matter is accustomed to the rhythm of a 365-day trip of the planet around the sun so I dance with the crowd in Gregorian patterns and come now to the completion of another Gaia revolution around Sol.

I made two trips to Honolulu this year to visit 93-year-old mother, diagnosed to be frail of bones requiring 24/7 attention at a medical facility. My fealty was made more intense by her mothering smile even in the midst of her frailty. She reminded me of the longevity that is programmed in my genes that I abused with tar and nicotine in my youthful lungs, so I am prudent in my life's covenant. I lopped off almost a decade from my statistical staying power.

This year, I lived too much at the edge of hoping against hope, and adjusted my radar accordingly. Wayward was a word applied to describe personal fidelity in relationships (playful is my term), and though my monastic *mendicare* these past years understood that being solitary is not a lonely journey, I pined too much for a certain company, though much more in the romance of the imagination rather than in the plane of earthy reality. I have since distanced

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara is a resident of Saipan teaching at the Shenyang Aerospace University in China. His email is pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



myself from the cuff and cusp of illusion.

Aging got dramatically demonstrated as the jowl of a second chin and the sag of a previously firm and rounded *heine* became more pronounced. I experienced loss of breath while navigating four flights to my classroom. It has become a federal effort to reach down and sock my feet warm in the cold. My hair now blooms like Jack Nickolson's electrified mane on a bad hair day!

My residence does have an elevator, which thankfully assists my knees. I live on the 11th floor, but some of my students reside in dorms that are 10 ten floors without elevators. Just imagining how they strive up and down the stairs daily exhausts my faculties. So this year, I shifted to the last scheduled 17-year retirement phase of my life's odyssey. I no longer protest when a young thing offers me her seat on the bus!

The university delivered the *coup de grâce* when it decided to no longer hire teachers over 65 years old. Approaching the sunset of my years, I signed loan papers on a dwelling with my host family; I get the use of a room on a first floor three-bedroom apartment near the university, at a fifth of cost. This will be home base to treks to Irkutsk and Tashkent in the next few years. Friends and family can also visit me should they travel to my northeast corner of China.

As the snow flurries drifted down this morning on my way to my last day in class, I ran into one of the grounds' maintenance men sweeping the snow off one of the walkways. Equipped with dried twigs attached to a pole, a homemade broom, he thoroughly swept the white cover off the red-bricked pathway.

I stopped to catch his attention, looked him in the eyes, and said "thank you" in the only Zhongwen I can decently pronounce. He was surprised that I would bother, and recognizing me as the foreign teacher who does not speak the language, he broke into a toothless but winsome smile.

I turned around and before entering the building, took a deep breath, cast a broad look around me including another glance on the bent but proud worker, and to no one in particular, uttered, *xie xie!* For his life and mine this past year, I wrapped it up in Peace! Equanimity and tranquility to all.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Would cost of living decline in '14?

Folks in the villages are edgy, quizzing if there's any hope to dampen the spark of increases slated to kick in this year, if not already. Health premium has just gone up by 40 percent, medication, shipping rates that would push increases in food cost, including the prohibitively high cost of utilities that is likely to increase as CUC takes out loans to pay for maintenance of the old system, among others.

These increases would hit consumers heavily, decreasing their purchasing power further while wages and salaries haven't increased at all. It stays the same and robs them of the ability to pay even for basic necessities. This scenario is very unhealthy! It definitely requires some firm leadership from upstairs. Let's see if there's an organized socio-economic plan to help governance on this score.

2014: It's about livelihood

This year's election isn't about any of the parties now in office. It's about the NMI and its people who have suffered long and hard under the poverty of leadership. The absence of conscious leadership has sent folks to the miserable abyss of abject poverty. This isn't leadership but a quick trip into negligence land and mediocrity.

Have you lifted your fingers to increase the loss of purchasing powers of ALL employees whose salaries have remained basically the same while increases fire like huge sparks into the heavens? These employees must deal with a 40-percent increase in health premiums and medication, prohibitive cost of utilities, impending increase in basic food commodities, and other increases. If the answer is in the affirmative, what are they and how would it help improve their lot? What about restoring the 25 percent in pension pay?

Must begin somewhere

If you will, the debate focuses on where does leadership begin efforts to reduce the cost of living for consumers throughout the islands. The right and timely decision would open up the retarded opportunities to begin timely economic revival.

Surrendering to complacency only deepens the miserable hardship in the villages. It's time to take aggressive proactive paradigms to move the needle of growth forward.

Our economic future rests on alternative energy that requires privatization of the utility agency. A decision to privatize begins the instant infusion of some \$300 million to install wind-energy power

generation. It freezes and nullifies all other expenses that would have been passed on to consumers.

It fosters the establishment of a reliable and affordable energy source that would be welcome tidings for both residential and business consumers. It's a lasting or anchor investment that would revive revenue generation beyond our wildest imaginings. It's a way to restore the exodus of over \$7 billion in foreign capital in recent past.

Alternative energy

Indeed, there are various alternative energies available for critical review. There's solar energy whose technology has gone Deep South. Solyndra's startup has collapsed, leaving taxpayers across the country with some \$535 million in liability. Suntech, the biggest Chinese solar firm, is bankrupt. Neither has offered much help for investment in this technology.

Solar requires large parcels of land for installation of solar panels. The NMI doesn't have the land size for this purpose. It bumps against the homesteading and farming programs, including investments. Its power source declines when clouds move in or when dust covers the panels. Residents of Wisconsin only know too well it isn't the technology to invest in. It costs about \$15K per household. Is there a back-up system for solar power?

While solar heads south, wind energy moves north. The Department of the Interior recently granted Maryland some \$7 million to purchase some 80,000 acres of land for an offshore wind turbine project. More wind power grids are slated for construction at the Texas panhandle with supplies manufactured by hundreds of workers in Colorado. Other states have seen major improvements in wind-energy technology and are mobilizing to use multiple provisions of power for its clientele. Its backup system is in battery storage facility capable of supporting power generation for at least three days.

Use of another fossil fuel known as "snake oil" or liquefied gas sounds attractive but it is equally problematic and economically questionable. Nearby Guam has shelved use of snake oil for its 250MW power plant improvement. Ours is less than 50MW. It's good to explore the lesson in the decision to postpone before taking any leap of faith, only to find out it's the wrong and costly decision piling hardship against bankrupt consumers.

While China has this resource, it means another purchase in fos-

sil fuel plus the tree bark powder needed to heat up the snake oil while it burns. It's also questionable whether oil could be shipped to the NMI. Furthermore, it would require infrastructure like pipeline and storage tank, all of which would cost money. Its expenses that would be passed down to consumers. How do we negotiate future increases in snake oil? It's economically impractical all the way around.

As soon as CUC is privatized with a firm decision to use wind energy, therein begins the steady and sturdy march to reining in lasting investments that would stabilize revenue generation for years to come. Leadership at whatever level owes our people timely decision on this matter. You can begin reducing the high cost of living with reliable and affordable alternative energy.

It's a major policy decision that would require critical ocular review of alternative energy available, technology and its backup system and whether it is realistically affordable for consumers here—residential and businesses.

■ ■ ■
The CNMI isn't endowed with natural resources it could use to sustain current expenses and obligations. Thus the dire need to move forward in decisive fashion to begin reining-in cost before turning life on the islands into a total hellish hole.

There's no more room for capitulation or mediocrity. It's time to shift gears to gradually restore revenue streams lost in recent past. Inevitably, our task on this score is larger than difficult challenges we've dealt with in recent past. Must move forward!

■ ■ ■
To give definition to self-government, it means certain decisions would have to be made to fix our tires that have gone off the wagon. Herein lies front and center the test of real leadership. If you aren't sure what it entails, please step aside and let the fully suited move in.

Spy wars: Americans need to know more than Snowden has revealed

Thanks to Edward Snowden, we know a lot about what the National Security Agency has secretly been up to. As a result, Congress, a U.S. District Court judge and the White House are considering ways to rein in the agency and protect our privacy. But we have yet to hear answers to key questions about how our intelligence agencies use the NSA's cache of data: Which Americans have been targeted, and why?

We know the NSA has compiled call records on virtually every American who has used a phone; vacuumed up Internet data such as chats, photographs, emails, videos and documents of targeted foreigners; and created a database from the "incidental collection" of Americans' Internet data that it says it may search without a court order. In the process, the NSA repeatedly exceeded its restrictions. And, significantly, its work has been driven by requests from "customer" agencies such as the FBI and CIA.

The Obama administration says the NSA's secret activities are legal and crucial to protecting the nation against terrorism. But similar national security claims led to granting our intelligence agencies great secrecy and power during the Cold War that in turn led to gross violations of our constitutional rights.

Only in the wake of the Watergate scandal and media reports based on leaks of classified information did Congress hold the first and, to date, the most thorough public hearings on intelligence activities with respect to the rights of Americans.

In the mid-1970s, the Church Committee, named for its chairman, Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, made shocking and still-relevant

findings. It found that J. Edgar Hoover's FBI spied on hundreds of thousands of Americans who dissented against government policy, on the pretext that they were part of a Kremlin-controlled plot.

The bureau went beyond surveillance to mount, in the committee's words, a "sophisticated vigilante operation" called COINTELPRO to "disrupt" and "neutralize" dissent, turning counterintelligence techniques developed for use against foreign enemies on students protesting the Vietnam War, civil rights groups and nonviolent leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr.

FBI officials went so far as to foment violence between the Black Panthers and a rival black power group, United Slaves, in Southern California, the committee found, and then proudly claimed credit for shootings and beatings.

At the University of California, FBI files subsequently uncovered through the Freedom of Information Act show the bureau harassed Mario Savio, a leader of the 1964 Free Speech Movement; waged a concerted campaign to oust UC President Clark Kerr because FBI officials disagreed with his policies; and gave personal and political help to Ronald Reagan, who had been an FBI informer in Hollywood and as governor vowed to crack down on Berkeley protests.

The Church Committee also investigated NSA surveillance and its relationship to its "customer" agencies and their activities.

From 1967 until 1973, the committee said, the NSA targeted the international communications of some 1,200 Americans on a "watch list" of names, submitted mainly by the FBI and other agencies, who ranged from members of radical political groups to celebrities to "ordinary citizens involved in protests against their government." Among those listed were King, Muhammad Ali and even Church.

These NSA intercepts were an integral part of massive domestic surveillance that targeted citizens because they exercised their constitutional rights, the committee reported. The FBI used the information to develop leads at the same time the bureau was conducting COINTELPRO; the CIA used it to spy on antiwar activists under its "questionable" Operation CHAOS; and the Army to improperly amass files on more than 100,000 U.S. citizens engaged in dissent.

In its defense, the NSA claimed that the communications of Americans had been collected "as an incidental and unintended

act in the conduct of the interception of foreign communications."

Sound familiar?

It is past time for another Church Committee. Congress should promptly conduct hearings and demand to know not only what the NSA is collecting but how its customer agencies are using it:

■ Is the NSA again monitoring American citizens and organizations engaged in dissent, such as the Occupy movement and other groups that have come under federal scrutiny?

■ Is the agency watching immigrants in the U.S., such as Muslim communities that have been the scene of invasive FBI investigations?

■ Is the NSA being deployed to gather intelligence from academic communities, which attract people of many creeds and are natural sites of dissent?

■ Which Americans have the NSA's customer agencies requested information about, and to what end?

Congress must be insistent, and it must use subpoena power, especially because intelligence officials have repeatedly misled Congress, the courts and the public about the NSA's doings.

Snowden's disclosures have spurred authorities to reconsider the scope of NSA surveillance, but history tells us real reform requires a public accounting of how intelligence was used in regard to Americans.

As the Church Committee concluded: "NSA's vast technological capability is a sensitive national asset which ought to be zealously protected for its value to our common defense. If not properly controlled, however, this same technological capability could be turned against the American people, at great cost to liberty."

COLLEGE

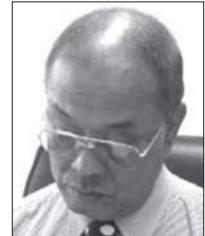
From Page 10

New data about important matters can be highly valuable, and the Gallup-Purdue undertaking, funded with a \$2 million grant from the Lumina Foundation, should provide a lot of it. Employers are bound to welcome the project. But no one stands to gain more than colleges and those who attend them.

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By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.

By SETH ROSENFIELD

Los Angeles Times



Seth Rosenfield is the author of *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power*, winner of the 2013 Pen Center USA Award for research nonfiction. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲88° ▾75°

▲88° ▾75°

▲87° ▾77°

▲87° ▾77°

▲87° ▾77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲88 ▾75
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▾76
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▾77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲86 ▾77
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲87 ▾77
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲88 ▾77
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲87 ▾77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲72 ▾63
Beijing	Sunny	▲45 ▾24
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲64 ▾54
Honolulu	Showers	▲80 ▾67
London	Rain	▲50 ▾39
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲77 ▾46
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲83 ▾75
Melbourne	Sunny	▲72 ▾49
Miami	Thundershowers	▲83 ▾71
New York	Rain	▲44 ▾35
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲50 ▾42
Paris	Showers	▲48 ▾43
Pusan	Windy	▲51 ▾37
Rome	Showers	▲55 ▾44
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲47 ▾35
San Francisco	Sunny	▲66 ▾42
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲42 ▾27
Tokyo	Sunny	▲52 ▾35
Washington, DC	Rain	▲45 ▾37

Tides

Sunrise/Sunset

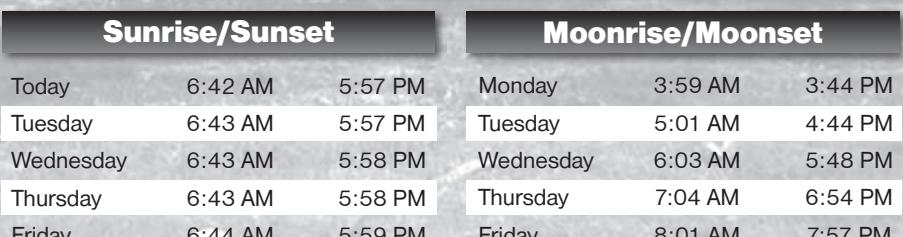
Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:42 AM	5:57 PM	Monday	3:59 AM	3:44 PM
Tuesday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM	Tuesday	5:01 AM	4:44 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM	Wednesday	6:03 AM	5:48 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM	Thursday	7:04 AM	6:54 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM	Friday	8:01 AM	7:57 PM

PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2013

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from northeast of Minami Tori Shima at 25N156E to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 450 miles northwest of the front. A near-equatorial trough meanders eastward from 2N130E through a weak circulation centered at 3N153E to end at EQ161E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present southeast of Koror and Yap and south of Chuuk and Pohnpei, or south of a line from 7N136E to 6N161E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers southeast of Majuro within 100 miles of a line from 4N169E to 3N180.



GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

ISLAND SNAPSHOT

Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 21, 2013

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5039	1:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
			via Rota
UA5038	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA5078	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA5072	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	1:35pm	2:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5038	2:40pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	2:40pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5038	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily
OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily
OZ121	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL288	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	1, 4, 5, 7
OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

Business

For some, home is where the smart is

By ANDREW KHOURI
AND ANDREA CHANG
LOS ANGELES TIMES

For Raffi Kajberouni, the keys to his Santa Clarita, Calif., home have become relics.

If he locks himself out, no problem. If a friend arrives at his two-story house before him, there's no waiting outside for Kajberouni to arrive. Kajberouni taps his smartphone and his front door unlocks.

He can also turn down the thermostat or view his home security cameras from anywhere in the world.

"A lot of my friends are jealous," the 31-year-old said. "It's like the home from 'Back to the Future,' but in real life."

From complete home systems to individual Internet-connected products such as high-tech appliances and power strips, the smart home is no longer a futuristic gimmick.

The technology behind smart gadgets—items that can be controlled remotely or perform tasks on their own—has been around for decades, but until recently the devices were rudimentary and, above all, expensive.

"It had always been an up-

scale-type business: Unless you were in the top 5 percent of income levels, you didn't have access to this type of connectivity," said Randy Light, merchant of home automation for Home Depot.

Wireless Internet and the widespread proliferation of smartphones are making smart home technologies more sophisticated—and affordable.

"This used to be something out of 'The Jetsons' or limited to the super-rich," said Jonathan Dorsheimer, an analyst at Canaccord Genuity. But as smart home technology has improved and costs have come down, "it's becoming more mainstream."

Analysts estimate that only a small single-digit percentage of homeowners have smart homes.

But the home automation systems and services market is expected to see enormous growth in the coming years and is forecast to reach \$14.7 billion in revenue globally by 2017, up from \$3.6 billion last year, according to NextMarket Insights.

These days, a wide swath of companies are clamoring to sell smart systems, including home security firms, telecommunications giants such

as AT&T and Verizon, cable providers and utilities.

That's expected to help "propel the market from its fairly modest size today to one which serves more than 35 million households by 2017," NextMarket said in its recent report.

Meanwhile, technology giants such as Samsung and LG are rolling out individual smart home products, part of the "Internet of things" trend that has seen Internet connectivity make its way into everyday items.

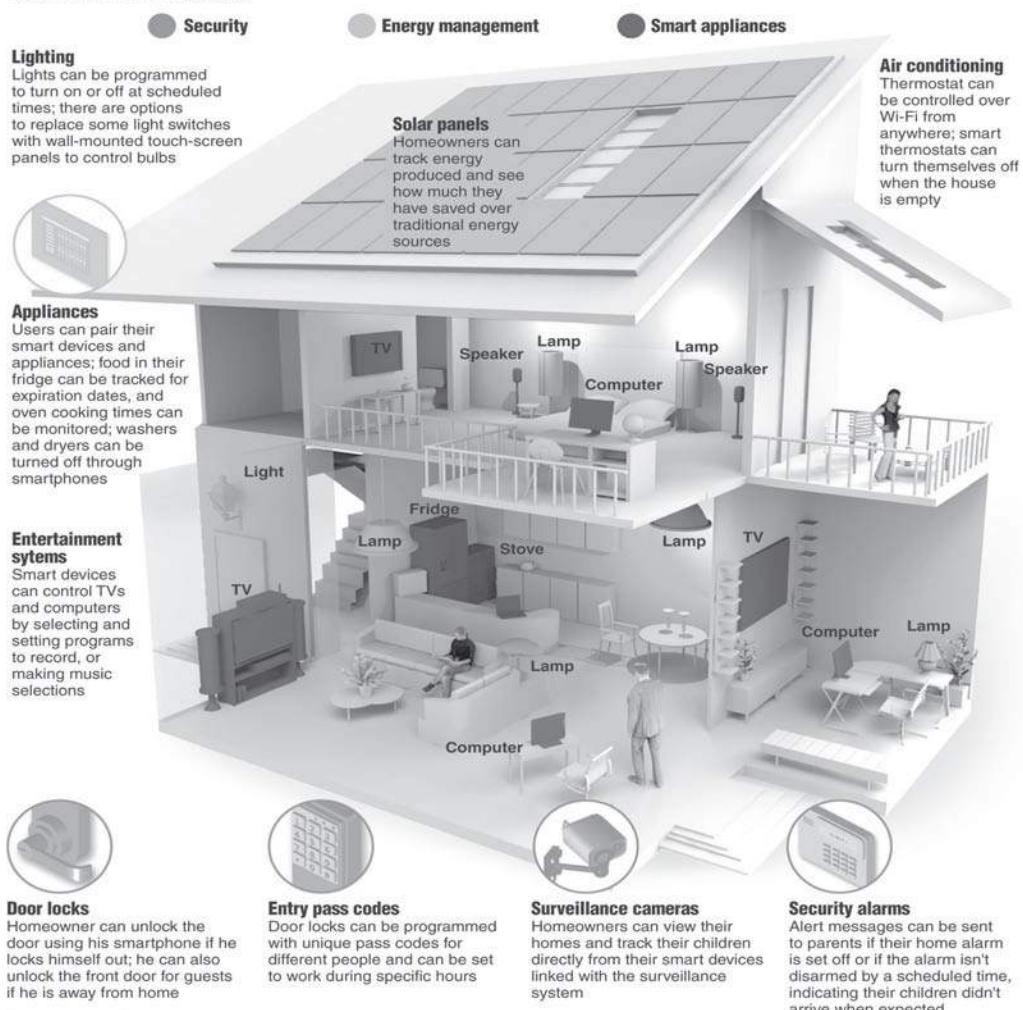
The housing recovery could also fuel growth if owners choose to pull out their rising equity to give their homes high-tech upgrades.

And as Americans purchase more newly built homes, they may increasingly find those digs fully integrated with their phones. Some of the nation's largest home builders now market tech-equipped houses' advantages over older homes.

Although new homes are usually more expensive, builders have emphasized the long-term cost savings owners can reap through solar panels and the ability to monitor and change their energy usage with smart devices.

Intelligent dwelling

The technology behind security and energy usage systems is becoming more standard in newer homes today. The pairing of sophisticated home technology and Internet connectivity with hand-held smart devices makes it easier to monitor one's home and save on energy costs.



Source: Los Angeles Times reporting
Graphic: Lorena Iniguez Elbee, Los Angeles Times

© 2013 MCT

Target: Customers' encrypted PINs were stolen

ATLANTA (AP)—Target said Friday that debit-card PINs were among the financial information stolen from millions of customers who shopped at the retailer earlier this month.

The company said the stolen personal identification numbers, which customers type into keypads to make secure transactions, were encrypted and that this strongly reduces risk to customers. In addition to the encrypted PINs, customer names, credit and debit card numbers, card expiration dates and the embedded code on the magnetic strip on back of the cards were stolen from about 40 million

credit and debit cards used at Target stores between Nov. 27 and Dec. 15.

Security experts say it's the second-largest theft of card accounts in U.S. history, surpassed only by a scam that began in 2005 involving retailer TJX Cos.

"We remain confident that PIN numbers are safe and secure," spokeswoman Molly Snyder said in an emailed statement Friday. "The PIN information was fully encrypted at the keypad, remained encrypted within our system, and remained encrypted when it was removed from our systems."

However, Gartner security

analyst Avivah Litan said Friday that the PINs for the affected cards are vulnerable and people should change their codes since such data has been decrypted, or unlocked, before. In 2009 computer hacker Albert Gonzalez pleaded guilty to conspiracy, wire fraud and other charges after masterminding debit and credit card breaches in 2005 that targeted retailers such as T.J. Maxx, Barnes & Noble and OfficeMax. Gonzalez's group was able to unlock encrypted data. Litan said changes have been made since then to make decrypting more difficult but "nothing is infallible."

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-14-006

CHALAN KIYA-KANAT TABLA WATERLINE CONNECTION (W12-022)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Chalan Kiya-Kanat Tabla Waterline Connection in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The scope-of-work consists of installation of new six (6) inch ductile iron distribution main connecting the Kanat Tabla booster pump through the existing Chalan Kiya water distribution main line. It also includes replacement and installation of various new valves, and water service lateral connections at designated areas within the Chalan Kiya Village.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in 240 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The Bid Tender Documents may be picked-up, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable); at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on December 24, 2013 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-14-006, Chalan Kiya-Kanat Tabla Waterline Connection, Saipan" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 14, 2014**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 27, 2013 to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., Manager, CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Christi Lazaro, Engineer, CUC Water-Wastewater Division via email christi.lazaro@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Support Assistant, CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ALAN W. FLETCHER
Executive Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>



PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT REPROGRAMMING OF EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT FUNDS

Program Year	Activity Name	Activity Status	Reprogram From	Reprogram to
2013	ESG13 Homelessness Prevention – Karidat Social Services	Ongoing	\$16,194.00	
2013	ESG13 Rapid Re-Housing- Karidat Social Services	Ongoing		\$16,194.00
Total			\$16,194.00	\$16,194.00

The public is invited to provide written and oral comments on the proposed reprogramming. Written comments will be accepted no later than 4:30 p.m., January 29, 2014, at the main office in Garapan, Post Office Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, and oral comments may be relayed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Director, at telephone number (670) 234-7670, 6866, 7689, or 9447, from Monday through Friday, during regular business hours, except on CNMI holidays. Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations to submit comments may also contact Ms. Mafnas at the telephone numbers above for assistance.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman

Nation

NSA phone surveillance legal, federal judge rules

NEW YORK (AP)—The debate over the National Security Agency's collection of millions of Americans' telephone records fell squarely into the courts when a federal judge in Manhattan upheld the legality of the program, citing its need in the fight against terrorism, just days after another federal judge concluded it was likely unconstitutional.

The ruling Friday by U.S. District Judge William H. Pauley III and the opposing view earlier this month by U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington, D.C., sets the stage for federal

appeals courts to contemplate the delicate balance between individual rights set out in the Constitution and the need to protect national security.

Pauley concluded the program was a necessary extension of steps taken after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. He said the program lets the government connect fragmented and fleeting communications and "represents the government's counter-punch" to the al-Qaida's terror network's use of technology to operate decentralized and plot international terrorist attacks remotely.

Police: La. shooter embroiled in difficult divorce

LOCKPORT, La. (AP)—It might have appeared that Ben Freeman was trying to right some wrongs in his life in the months before police say he killed three people and himself.

In June, he agreed to pay his ex-wife Jeanne (ZHANNE) Gouaux (GO) \$22,560 in overdue child support payments dating back two years, court records show. A settlement filed the next month show that the



Freeman

couple would sell three adjacent lots near her parents' house and split the \$25,000 in proceeds. Freeman also agreed to pay Gouaux \$39,000.

But June also was the month that Gouaux and her father filed a complaint against Freeman.

And on Oct. 23, he pleaded guilty to one of two criminal telephone-harassment charges based on that complaint, Lafourche Parish Clerk of Court Vernon H.

Rodrigue said.

Freeman, 38, was given a deferred sentence of a \$250 fine or 10 days in jail and put on unsupervised probation for a year, and the second count of criminal harassment was dismissed, Rodriguez said.

On Nov. 27, Freeman was issued a citation for simple battery domestic violence against his current wife, Denise Taylor Freeman, according to the Terrebonne Parish Sheriff's Office. Freeman's court date had been scheduled for Jan. 16.

"This blunt tool only works because it collects everything," Pauley said. "The collection is broad, but the scope of counter-terrorism investigations is unprecedented."

Pauley's decision contrasts with Leon's grant of a preliminary injunction against the collection of phone records of two men who had challenged the program. The Washington, D.C., jurist said the program likely violates the U.S. Constitution's ban on unreasonable search. The judge has since stayed the effect of his ruling, pending a government appeal.

Despite files, Conn. school shooter remains enigma

By ALLEN G. BREED and
MICHAEL BIESECKER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adam Lanza was fascinated with chimpanzees because of their capacity for empathy, but could show little or none himself.

He could write stories that struck horror into a teacher's heart, then turn around and craft a poem so beautiful it moved listeners to tears.

As a kid growing up in Connecticut, he rode bikes, played baseball and saxophone, and kept hamsters. As a man, he taped black garbage bags over his bedroom windows, retreating into a world of violent video games, guns and statistics on mass murder.

Despite the release Friday by Connecticut state police of thousands of pages of interviews, photographs and writings, the man who gunned down 20 first-graders and six adults at Newtown's Sandy Hook Elementary School on Dec. 14, 2012, remains an enigma.

Some of the most tantalizing evidence of the inner workings of the 20-year-old Newtown man's brain appears to be contained in writings that the police chose not to release.

An eight-page document titled simply, "me," is described in a police inventory as "detailing relationships, ideal companion, culture, voting, personal beliefs, describes doctors touching children as rape." Another, named "tomorrow," apparently contains details about the author's "desires, list of the benefits of being thin and negative connotations associated with being overweight, list of goals ..."

What the files do show is a deeply troubled young man, living with a single mother who was either unable or unwilling to accept the depths of his illness.

The picture most people have of Adam Lanza is the skeletal, blank face from photographs released by police following the massacre. Childhood photos show a smiling boy who could look into a camera, but signs of trouble—if not violence—emerged early.

In his preteen years, Lanza had difficulty with speech and was "being followed medically for seizure activities," according to investigators.

"In preschool his conduct included repetitive behaviors, temper tantrums, smelling things that were not there, ex-

cessive hand washing and eating idiosyncrasies," prosecutors said in one report.

But Lanza's real problems appear to have begun after his parents' separation in 2001, when he was 9 years old.

Adam had attended Sandy Hook Elementary. In fifth grade, he turned in a cute story about a "chicken tree" whose hen fruit "contains everything you ever will need to live like calcium and water."

"It spits out seeds every four hours by using its long chute," he wrote in a slanted, choppy block script. "The vines that holds the chicken is very soft and very strong."

That same year, Lanza produced a more disturbing work.

According to a boy who worked on it with him in class, "The Big Book of Granny" was supposed to be a "comic-style book" in the vein of "Calvin & Hobbes." It was far from it.

In a section of the book labeled "Granny's Clubhouse of Happy Children," typed as dialogue from an imaginary television show, Granny and her son, "Bobolicious," terrorize a group of children. In one episode, Bobolicious tells the children they're going to play a game of "Hide and go die."

CNMI Water Task Force IFB 14-GOV-039



Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting Sealed Bids from qualified individuals or firms for the lease of a warehouse on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The procurement specifications and special terms and conditions will be available at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan on or after **December 23, 2013**.

All questions regarding this Invitation for Bids shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 PM, **January 3, 2014** to Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, at facsimile number (670) 664-2279.

Sealed Bids must be marked **"Lease of Warehouse", IFB14-GOV-039**. An original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan no later than **2:00 P.M. , local time, on January 22, 2014** at which time Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations (NMIAC 70-30.3). Bid procedures shall be in full compliance with NMIAC Section 70-30.3-205: Competitive Sealed Bidding. Preference is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs. Award of a contract is contingent upon approval from DOI/OIA.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All Bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/Eloy S. Inos
Governor

/s/Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR SUPPLY OF VIDEO LOTTERY CENTRAL CONTROL SYSTEM AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES RFP-GOV14-038

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Jude S. Hofsneider are soliciting proposals in compliance with NMIAC § 70-30.3-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposals) for the provision of video lottery central control system and associated services. The Commonwealth is seeking a qualified supplier to provide a system for monitoring and control of a proposed video lottery gaming operation up that complies with identified specifications to facilitate establishment of a video lottery gaming operations on the Island of Saipan for a twenty-year period.

The Request for Proposals ("RFP") will be available on December 16, 2013 from the Office of Capital Improvement, Juan Sablan Memorial Building – Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 (670-664-2375). Submittals must follow the format identified in the RFP and comply with all requirements. Qualifications will be evaluated based on the factors as identified in the table below.

Element	Possible Points
I. Resources of proposer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Financial resources (15 points) b. Gaming experience (15 points) c. Entity resources (10 points) 	25 points
II. Proposed Commonwealth Central Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proposed hardware (10 points) b. Proposed software (20 points) c. Monitoring and Reporting capacity d. Security, Testing, and flexibility 	25 points
III. Cost Projections	25 points
IV. Revenue Requirements	25 points
Total	100 points

Award shall be made to the firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the government. All questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. on January 7, 2014 (ChST) to James R. Stump at the Office of Capital Improvement via fax to (670-664-2408).

All proposals must be sealed and marked "RFP14-GOV-038 Supply of Video Lottery Central Control System and Associated Services" and in compliance with the request for proposal structure and include an original and six (6) copies and submitted no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, January 31, 2014 (ChST) to:

Herman S. Sablan, Director
Marianas Procurement & Supply - Lower Base
P.O. Box 510008 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all submittals. Proposer bears all risk concerning delivery. For further information contact the Office of Capital Improvement 670-664-2375.

Asia

Fire on express train in India kills at least 26

KOTHACHERUVU, India (AP)—A fire engulfed a coach of an express train in southern India on Saturday, killing at least 26 passengers, many of whom became trapped and suffocated after the doors failed to open, officials said.

As the inferno and thick black smoke raced through the car at about 3:45 a.m., panicked passengers broke the windows and many saved themselves by jumping from the train.

Sixty-seven passengers were in the carriage when the fire broke out about 2 kilometers (1 mile) from the small town of

Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh state, said railways spokesman C.S. Gupta.

The train was brought to a halt and the burning coach was delinked from the rest of the cars to prevent the fire from spreading, Gupta said.

The fire spread to a second coach, but the blaze was put out before it caused much damage, Gupta said.

Firefighters put out the blaze in the burning coach and retrieved at least 26 bodies, including two children, said a railway official at the site of the fire. More than a dozen

people were brought to hospitals with injuries sustained when they jumped from the train, the official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Firefighters had to force the doors open and make their way through the smoke-filled coach to reach the dead, the official said.

Many bodies were found near the jammed doors, he said.

Medical teams carried out autopsies to identify the bodies, many of which were charred beyond recognition.

1 protester killed in new Thai political violence

BANGKOK (AP)—Gunmen killed an anti-government activist and wounded two others in Thailand's capital on Saturday, while protesters elsewhere blocked candidates from registering for upcoming elections, deepening a political crisis that threatens to derail democracy in the Southeast Asian nation.

The registration for the Feb. 2 polls was suspended in four of the country's 76 provinces. All four were southern provinces where the demonstrators, who are seeking to oust Prime Min-

ister Yingluck Shinawatra, enjoy support.

The events followed comments Friday by the powerful army chief in which he declined to rule out the possibility of a coup in the country, which is a major U.S. ally, Southeast Asia's second-largest economy and a popular tourist destination.

The long-running dispute between Thailand's bitterly divided political factions flared anew in November after Yingluck's elected government tried to introduce an amnesty bill for her

brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, to enable him to return to Thailand from self-imposed exile and escape a jail term for corruption.

Yingluck called early elections as a way of diffusing the crisis, but the protesters are demanding she resign and hand over power to an unelected council to carry out reforms. They are trying to disrupt the polls, which most people believe will give her a strong mandate thanks to strong support in the north and northeast of the country.



A policeman inspects the damage inside a train after an accident at Kothacheruvu, about 155 kilometers (96 miles) north of Bangalore, India, Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013.

AP

China formalizes easing of one-child policy

BEIJING (AP)—China on Saturday formally allowed couples to have a second child if one parent is an only child, the first major easing of its 3-decade-old restrictive birth policy.

First announced by the ruling Communist Party's leadership in November, the decision was officially sanctioned by the standing committee of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Implemented around 1980, China's birth policy has limited most couples to only one child, but has allowed a second child if neither parent has siblings or if the first born to a rural couple is a girl.

Demographers and policy makers have estimated the easing would benefit some 15 million to 20 million Chinese parents—mostly in cities—and result in 1 million to 2 million extra births per year in the first few years, on top of the 16 mil-

lion babies born annually in China. They say the easing is so incremental that the extra births are not expected to strain resources such as the health care and education.

China has credited the restrictive policy with managing its population growth and improving the economy, but critics say it is a violation of human rights.

China is the world's most populous country with 1.35 billion people.

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

SUPPLY OF VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

RFP-GOV14-030

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Jude S. Hofsneider are soliciting proposals in compliance with NMIAC § 70-30.3-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposals) for the provision of video lottery terminals and associated services. The Commonwealth is seeking a qualified supplier to provide up to one thousand (1,000) video lottery terminals that comply with identified specifications and associated gaming software and services to establish and maintain video lottery gaming operations on the Island of Saipan for a twenty-year period.

The Request for Proposals ("RFP") will be available on December 16, 2013 from the Office of Capital Improvement, Juan Sablan Memorial Building – Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 (670-664-2375). Submittals must follow the format identified in the RFP and comply with all requirements. Qualifications will be evaluated based on the factors as identified in the table below.

Element	Possible Points
I. Resources of proposer a. Financial capacity (10 points) b. Gaming experience (10 points) c. Entity resources (10 points)	30 points
II. Suggested Approach to Commonwealth Gaming a. Understanding of market (10 points) b. Proposed approach (10 points) c. Proposed video lottery terminals (10 points) d. Proposed games (10 points) e. Preventative maintenance and upgrades (10 points) f. Total Costs (10 points)	60 points
III. Required Revenue (10 points)	10 points

Award shall be made to the firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the government. All questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. on January 7, 2013 (ChST) to Mr. James Stump at the Office of Capital Improvement via fax to (670-664-2408).

All proposals must be sealed and marked "RFP-GOV14-030 Supply of Video Lottery Terminals and Associated Services" and in compliance with the request for proposal structure and include an original and six (6) copies and submitted no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, January 31, 2014 (ChST) to:

Herman S. Sablan, Director
Marianas Procurement & Supply - Lower Base
P.O. Box 510008 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all submittals. Proposer bears all risk concerning delivery. For further information contact the Office of Capital Improvement 670-664-2375.

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

VIDEO LOTTERY GAMING SITE AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

RFP-GOV14-037

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Jude S. Hofsneider are soliciting proposals in compliance with NMIAC § 70-30.3-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposals) for the provision of video lottery gaming site and services. The services requested will be to provide a site for the conduct of video lottery gaming and associated services on the Island of Saipan.

The Request for Proposals ("RFP") will be available on December 16, 2013 from the Office of Capital Improvement, Juan Sablan Memorial Building – Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 (670-664-2375). Submittals must follow the format identified in the RFP and comply with all requirements. Qualifications will be evaluated based on the factors as identified in the table below.

Element	Points
1 Financial capacity of proposer	20
2 Gaming experience	20
3 Proposed gaming area	30
4 Business Plan	30
Total	100

Award shall be made to the firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the government. All questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. on January 7, 2014 (ChST) to James R. Stump at the Office of Capital Improvement via fax to (670-664-2408).

All proposals must be sealed and marked "RFP-GOV-037 Video Lottery Gaming Site Proposal" and in compliance with the request for proposal structure and include an original and four copies and submitted no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, January 31, 2014 (ChST) to:

Herman S. Sablan, Director
Marianas Procurement & Supply - Lower Base
P.O. Box 510008 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all submittals and bear all risk concerning delivery. For further information contact the Office of Capital Improvement 670-664-2375. All proposals become the property of the Commonwealth.

World

Activists: Syrian airstrike kills 21 in Aleppo



In this Monday, Dec. 23, 2013 citizen journalism image provided by Aleppo Media Center AMC, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, A Syrian man mourns as he sits in the rubble of buildings following a Syrian government airstrike in Aleppo, Syria.

BEIRUT (AP)—A Syrian government airstrike hit a crowded vegetable market in a rebel-held neighborhood of the northern city of Aleppo on Saturday, shattering cars and storefronts and killing at least 21 people, activists said.

For nearly two weeks, President Bashar Assad's warplanes and helicopters have pounded opposition-controlled areas of the divided city. Activists say the aerial assault has killed more than 400 people since it began Dec. 15.

The campaign comes in the run-up to an international peace conference scheduled to start Jan. 22 in Switzerland to try to find a political solution to Syria's civil war. Some observers say the Aleppo assault fits into Assad's apparent strategy

of trying to expose the opposition's weakness to strengthen his own hand ahead of the negotiations.

Saturday's airstrike slammed into a marketplace in the Tariq al-Bab neighborhood, the Aleppo Media Center activist group

But Machar rejected that, saying in an interview with the BBC that any cease-fire had to be negotiated by delegations from both sides. The government in the capital, Juba, seized on that statement to further condemn Machar.

In addition to those killed, tens of thousands are seeking shelters at United Nations camps.

estimated 1,000 people have been killed, leaders from across East Africa announced on Friday that South Sudan had agreed to a "cessation of hostilities" against forces loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar, accused by the government of leading a coup attempt on Dec. 15 that erupted into spiraling violence.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
TO LEASE AND OPERATE FOOD & BEVERAGE CONCESSION AT THE FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

CPA-RFP-004-14

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) invites the submission of proposal to lease and operate a Food & Beverage Concession at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Proposals prepared in accordance with instructions stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP) package will be received and accepted by the CPA until 4:30 p.m., January 6, 2014. Late proposals will not be considered. The CPA is not responsible for late or misdirected delivery of proposals.

The proposal packages and other consideration may be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport beginning December 6, 2013 during the hours of 7:30 to 4:30 upon the payment of \$50.00. This payment is nonrefundable. Payments shall be made at the Accounting Office which is located at the 2nd floor on the Departure Terminal in cash, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

One original and two copies of the proposals shall be submitted in a sealed package and clearly marked on the outside "Proposal to Lease and Operate Food & Beverage Concession CPA-RFP-004-14."

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if in its opinion to do so is in CPA's best interest.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
TO LEASE AND OPERATE A LIMITED FOOD & BEVERAGE CONCESSION AT THE FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

CPA-RFP-003-14

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) invites the submission of proposal to lease and operate a Limited Food & Beverage Concession at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Proposals prepared in accordance with instructions stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP) package will be received and accepted by the CPA until 4:30 p.m., January 6, 2014. Late proposals will not be considered. The CPA is not responsible for late or misdirected delivery of proposals.

The proposal packages and other consideration may be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport beginning December 6, 2013 during the hours of 7:30 to 4:30 upon the payment of \$50.00. This payment is nonrefundable. Payments shall be made at the Accounting Office which is located at the 2nd floor on the Departure Terminal in cash, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

One original and two copies of the proposals shall be submitted in a sealed package and clearly marked on the outside "Proposal to Lease and Operate a Limited Food & Beverage Concession CPA-RFP-003-14."

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if in its opinion to do so is in CPA's best interest.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of activists on the ground, said 25 people, including four children, were killed and dozens were wounded in the strike. The Aleppo Media Center published a list of 21 names of people it said were killed in the air raid.

The discrepancy could not be immediate reconciled, but differing death tolls are common in the chaotic aftermath of such attacks.

An activist with the Aleppo Media Center, Hassoun Abu Faisal, said the airstrike took place around 10 a.m. local time when the market was packed with shoppers.

"Cars were damaged, debris and rubble are everywhere," he said via Skype. "Many of the wounded have lost limbs."

One amateur video posted online showed scenes of carnage: a body, its legs twister un-

der it, lying in a pool of blood in front of a smashed car; the body of another man ripped in half in the middle of the street; men rushing a limp body past shattered storefronts.

In another video, blankets cover at least three bodies placed on a sidewalk. Muddy black shoes poke out from under one of the blankets.

The videos appeared genuine and corresponded to other AP reporting of the events depicted.

Both Abu Faisal and the Observatory reported airstrikes in other opposition-held areas of Aleppo, including Myassar, although there was no immediate word on casualties.

Aleppo, Syria's largest city, has been a major front in the country's civil war since rebels launched an offensive there in mid-2012. The city has been heavily damaged since then in fighting that has left it divided into rebel- and government-controlled areas.

Benedict takes up Francis' invite for lunch

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Retired Pope Benedict XVI has shared a holiday meal with his successor, Francis, at the Vatican.

Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano said Saturday that Benedict took up a luncheon invitation from Pope Francis, and the two men dined together at Francis' residence, at the Santa Marta hotel on Vatican City's grounds. The newspaper gave no details of the meal, except to say the two popes' personal secretaries and two other Vatican officials joined them at the lunch on Friday.

Francis had extended the invitation for a holiday meal when

**Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government**

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB14-COTA/FTA-036

Submission Date: January 09, 2014

Time: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) 2013 MOBILITY EQUIPPED VANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

The specifications for this project will be available on or after December 16, 2013 at COTA, Office of the Special Assistant for Public Transportation, 2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Building, Isa Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

This is a federally funded project; bidders are required to comply with FTA federal contract clauses as applicable.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if in its opinion to do so, would be in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ Thomas J. Camacho
Special Assistant for Public Transportation

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, P&S

**Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government**

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB14-COTA/FTA-035

Submission Date: January 09, 2014

Time: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) 2013 MOBILITY EQUIPPED VANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

The specifications for this project will be available on or after December 16, 2013 at COTA, Office of the Special Assistant for Public Transportation, 2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Building, Isa Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

This is a federally funded project; bidders are required to comply with FTA federal contract clauses as applicable.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if in its opinion to do so, would be in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ Thomas J. Camacho
Special Assistant for Public Transportation

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, P&S

Focus

The world braces for global retirement crisis

By PAUL WISEMAN, DAVID MCHUGH and ELAINE KURTEN-BACH
AP BUSINESS WRITERS

WASHINGTON (AP)—A global retirement crisis is bearing down on workers of all ages.

Spawned years before the Great Recession and the financial meltdown in 2008, the crisis was significantly worsened by those twin traumas. It will play out for decades, and its consequences will be far-reaching.

Many people will be forced to work well past the traditional retirement age of 65—to 70 or even longer. Living standards will fall, and poverty rates will rise for the elderly in wealthy countries that built safety nets for seniors after World War II. In developing countries, people's rising expectations will be frustrated if governments can't afford retirement systems to replace the tradition of children caring for aging parents.

The problems are emerging as the generation born after World War II moves into retirement.

"The first wave of under-prepared workers is going to try to go into retirement and will find they can't afford to do so," says Norman Dreger, a retirement specialist in Frankfurt, Germany, who works for Mercer, a global consulting firm.

The crisis is a convergence of three factors:

■ Countries are slashing retirement benefits and raising the age to start collecting them. These countries are awash in debt after overspending last decade and racking up enormous deficits since the recession. Now, they face a demographics disaster as retirees live longer and falling birth rates mean there will be fewer workers to support them.

■ Companies have eliminated traditional pension plans that cost employees nothing and guaranteed them a monthly check in retirement.

■ Individuals spent freely and failed to save before the recession, and they saw much of their wealth disappear once it hit.

Those factors have been documented individually. What is less appreciated is their combined ferocity and their global scope.

"Most countries are not ready to meet what is sure to be one of the defining challenges of the 21st century," the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, concluded in a report this fall.

Mikio Fukushima, who is 52

and lives in Tokyo, is typical of those facing an uncertain retirement. Fukushima, who works in private investment, worries that he might have to move somewhere cheaper, maybe Malaysia, after age 70 to get by comfortably on income from his investments and a public pension of just \$10,000 a year.

If he stayed in Japan, he says, "We wouldn't be able to travel at all."

People like Fukushima who are fretting over their retirement prospects stand in contrast to many who are already retired. Many workers were recipients of generous corporate pensions and government benefits that had yet to be cut.

Jean-Pierre Bigand, 66, retired Sept. 1, in time to enjoy all the perks of a retirement system in France that's now in peril. Bigand lives in the countryside outside the city of Rouen in Normandy. He has a second home in Provence. He's just taken a vacation on Oleron island off the Atlantic Coast and is planning a five-week trip to Guadeloupe. "Travel is our biggest expense," he says.

In Rochester, Minn., Elaine Case, 58, and her husband, Bill Wiktor, 61, both retired at 56 after three-decade careers at IBM. They have company pensions and will receive Social Security in a few years. They love to travel. Wiktor climbed Mount Kilimanjaro last year. They've taken a trans-Atlantic cruise and plan next year to hike Peru's Inca trail.

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ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS
HOUSING CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
-v-
HILBERT HENRY C.
SAN NICOLAS,
Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION
NO. 11-0322

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on October 5, 2012, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot No. 008 T 266, situated in Marpo Heights, Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 812 square meters, more or less, as shown on DLS Check No. 008 T 03, dated March 31, 1999, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 99-848 dated March 31, 1999, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 17, 2014, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 20th day of December, 2013:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer



In this Sept. 9, 2013 photo, Dong Linhua, 59, works at his workshop in Shanghai. "I heard that the authorities might postpone the age of the retirement, but I sure hope not, since I've already worked for almost 42 years," says Dong.

"We're both enjoying our second lives immensely and with gratitude," Case says.

A BRIEF GOLDEN AGE

The notion of extended, leisurely retirements, like the ones Bigand, Case and Wiktor are enjoying, is relatively new. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck established the world's first state pension system in 1889. The United States introduced Social Security in 1935.

In the prosperous years after
Continued on Next Page

WANTED

Maintenance Supervisor

- More than 4 years experience
- Computer skills required (word & excel)
- Manage & direct staff members
- Ability to handle & execute projects effectively
- Extensive experience in purchasing

Submit your resume at Atom's Co., Ltd. Office located in Lower Miha Housing Area, Garapan. For more info please contact 233-8880

Procurement And Supply CNMI Government



INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB14-DLNR/DFW-034

Submission Date: January 09, 2014

Time: 10:00 A.M.

"GOLDEN WHITE-EYE RESEARCH

A PROJECT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE'

Copies of the Scope of Work and specifications may be picked up at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Dr., Saipan, during regular working hours.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals; in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ Arnold I. Palacios
Secretary of DLNR

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL 2013-CDA-06-RFP

Submission Date: January 6, 2014 Time: 10:00 a.m.

"BROWNFIELDS MARKETING PLAN FOR CDA"

Copies of the specifications may be picked up at the Commonwealth Development Authority Office, 2nd Floor in Oleai, Saipan during regular business hours.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ MANUEL A. SABLAN
Executive Director

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL 2013-CDA-05-RFP

Submission Date: January 6, 2014 Time: 10:00 a.m.

"BROWNFIELDS MARKET FEASIBILITY STUDY"

Copies of the specifications may be picked up at the Commonwealth Development Authority Office, 2nd Floor in Oleai, Saipan during regular business hours.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ MANUEL A. SABLAN
Executive Director

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director P&S

Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. is inviting qualified individuals to apply for the following position:

Operations Manager

Job duties: The operations manager is responsible in planning and implementation of the overall business direction of the company. Responsible for creating production and marketing plans and making sure these plans are implemented and targets are achieved accordingly.

Job requirements: Minimum 5 years experience in managing shrimp aquaculture business. Must have the technical knowledge on shrimp farming as well as the skills necessary in business management. Must be a graduate of a 4-year degree course related to aquaculture or business management and have proven track record of managing businesses and people. The position also requires being on call 24 hours, 7 days a week. Basic knowledge of electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems also required.

Electrician

Job duties: Pull out, installation, repair and maintenance of water pumps, motor aerators, and other support equipment for aquaculture. Repair and maintenance of electrical installations, building, and other structures. Repair and maintenance of heavy duty generators.

Job requirements: Minimum 4 years experience in electrical and mechanical works. Related engineering degree and previous experience in aquaculture operations is an advantage and preferred. Willing to be on call 24 hours a day. Able to lift up to 75lbs.

Accountant

Job duties: Prepare, examine or analyze accounting record, financial statements or other financial reports to assess accuracy, completeness and conformance to reporting and procedural standards. Report to management regarding the finances of establishments. Establish tables of accounts and design entries to proper accounts. Develop, implement, modify and document record keeping and accounting systems. Compute taxes owed and prepare tax returns ensuring compliance with payment, reporting and other tax requirements.

Job requirements: Accounting graduate or 4 years bachelor degree in accounting. Minimum 5 years experience in accounting. Well-versed in Peachtree accounting or any other accounting software. Must be skilled in use of MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint. Strong communication and interpersonal skills, team player and with positive attitude.

Aquaculture Farmer

Job duties: Feeding and monitoring of live aquatic animals, cleaning of tanks, weighing of feeds, harvesting and packing, nighttime monitoring, grounds maintenance and other related jobs.

Job requirements: High school graduate, in good physical and health condition, able to lift up to 60lbs., knowledge of basic mathematical calculations. Must be willing to work night shifts, be a team player and with good working attitude.

Sales Representative

Job duties: Market development, delivery, collection and other customer relations duty. Formulations of sales and marketing strategies. Market survey and analysis and competitor benchmarking.

Job requirements: Minimum experience of 4 years in the seafood retail and wholesale business. Professional driving skills required. Proficient in MS Word and Excel. With proven track record in sales specifically in market development. With excellent oral and written communication skills.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at the Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, January 06, 2014.

Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

From Page 17

World War II, governments in rich countries expanded their pension systems. In addition, companies began to offer pensions that paid employees a guaranteed amount each month in retirement—so-called defined-benefit pensions.

It got even better in the 1980s. Many countries began to coax older employees out of the workforce to make way for the young. They did so by reducing the age employees became eligible for full government pension benefits. The age fell from 64.3 years in 1949 to 62.4 years in 1999 in the relatively wealthy countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

That created a new, and perhaps unrealistic, "concept of retirement as an extended period of leisure," Mercer consultant Dreger says. "You'd take long vacations. That was the Golden Age."

Then came the 21st century.

UNDER SIEGE

As the 2000s dawned, governments—and companies—looked at actuarial tables and birth rates and decided they couldn't afford the pensions they'd promised.

People were living longer. The average man in 30 countries the OECD surveyed will live 19 years after retirement. That's up from 13 years in 1958, when many countries were devising their generous pension plans.

The OECD says the average retirement age would have to reach 66 or 67, from 63 now, to "maintain control of the cost of pensions" from longer lifespans.

Compounding the problem is that birth rates are falling just as the bulge of people born in developed countries after World War II retires.

Populations are aging rapidly as a result. The higher the percentage of older people, the harder it is for a country to finance its pension system because relatively fewer younger workers are paying taxes.

In China, the 65-and-older population will rise from 11 percent of the working-age population in 2010 to 42 percent in 2050. In the United States, this old-age dependency ratio will rise from 20 percent to 35 percent.

In response, governments are raising retirement ages and slashing benefits. In 30 OECD countries, the average age at which men can collect full retirement benefits will rise to 64.6 in 2050, from 62.9 in 2010; for women, it will rise from 61.8 to 64.4. Italy is raising the age from 59 to 65.

In the wealthy countries it studied, the OECD found that the pension reforms of the 2000s will cut retirement benefits by an average 20 percent.

Even France, where government pensions have long been generous, has begun modest reforms to reduce costs. France has raised the number of years people must work before they can receive a full pension from

41.5 to 43. More changes are likely coming.

"France is a retirees' paradise now," says Richard Jackson, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "You're not going to want to retire there in 20 to 25 years."

The fate of government pensions is important because they are the cornerstone of retirement income. Across the 34-country OECD, governments provide 59 percent of retiree income, on average. The government's share ranges as high as 86 percent in Hungary. In the United States, the world's largest economy, it's about 38 percent.

If rich countries don't cut pension costs even more, says Standard & Poor's, a credit-rating agency, their government debt will more than triple as a percentage of annual economic output by 2050. The debt of most countries would drop to what is commonly called junk status.

Many of those facing a financial squeeze in retirement can look to themselves for part of the blame. They spent many years before the Great Recession borrowing and spending instead of setting money aside for old age. In the U.S., households took on an additional \$5.4 trillion in debt—an increase of 75 percent—from the start of 2003 until mid-2008, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The savings rate fell from nearly 13 percent of after-tax income in the early 1980s to 2 percent in 2005.

The National Institute on Retirement Security estimates that Americans are at least \$6.8 trillion short of what they need to have saved for a comfortable retirement. For those 55 to 64, the shortfall comes to \$113,000 per household.

"People are going to be shocked at how little they have," says Alicia Munnell, director of Boston College's Center for Retirement Research. "For some middle-income people, it will mean canceling the RV"—the recreational vehicle that has become a symbol of retiree life in America. For those worse off, she says, it could mean an old age in poverty.

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS MAKES THINGS WORSE

As if demographics weren't burden enough, the outlook became worse when the global banking system went into a panic in 2008 and tipped the world into the worst recession since the 1930s.

Government budget deficits—the gap between what governments spend each year and what they collect in taxes—swelled in Europe and the United States. Tax revenue shrank, and governments pumped money into rescuing their banks and financing unemployment benefits and other welfare programs.

That escalated pressure on governments to reduce spending on pensions or raise revenue. Hungary took one of

the most draconian steps: It demanded that its citizens surrender their private retirement accounts to the government or give up their government pensions. Poland seized a portion of private retirement accounts. Ireland imposed an annual tax on retirement accounts.

The Great Recession threw tens of millions of people out of work worldwide. For many who kept their jobs, pay has stagnated the past five years, even as living costs have risen, making it tougher to save for retirement. In addition, government retirement benefits are based on lifetime earnings, and they'll now be lower. The Urban Institute, a think tank in Washington, estimates that lost wages and pay raises will shrink the typical American worker's income at age 70 by 4 percent—an average of \$2,300 a year.

Leslie Lynch, 52, of Glastonbury, Conn., had \$30,000 in her 401(k) retirement account when she lost her \$65,000-a-year job last year at an insurance company. She'd worked there 28 years. She has depleted her retirement savings trying to stay afloat.

"I don't believe that I will ever retire now," she says.

She also worries about her children, all in their 20s: "I don't think my three sons will ever retire" because pay raises have been so weak for so long.

Less money from a government pension isn't the only factor weighing on future retirees. When the financial crisis struck five years ago, the world's central banks cut interest rates to record lows to stop the economic free-fall. That also punished people with much of their money in investments that pay interest.

"The low-interest rate environment has been brutal," says Catherine Collinson, president of the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies. She points out that \$500,000 in savings would yield \$25,000 a year at an interest rate of 5 percent, just \$2,500 at 0.5 percent.

The crisis also frightened many away from the stock market. Stocks can be riskier than other investments, but they yield more long term. Many investors have shunned stocks while the world's stock markets have soared. In the United States, the Dow Jones industrial average has risen nearly 150 percent since March 2009. Japan's Nikkei index is up 56 percent just this year.

The past five years have been so tumultuous that some people have been reluctant to invest at all.

Olivia Mitchell, who studies retirement at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, says her grown daughters rebuffed her when she urged them to save more for retirement. Stocks, they said, are too risky. And bonds don't yield enough interest to be worth the bother.

THE ASIA CHALLENGE

In Asia, workers are facing a

different retirement worry, a byproduct of their astonishing economic growth.

Traditionally, Chinese and Koreans could expect their grown children to care for them as they aged. But newly prosperous young people increasingly want to live on their own. They also are more likely to move to distant cities to take jobs, leaving parents behind. Countries like China and South Korea are at an "awkward" stage, says Jackson at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: The old ways are vanishing, but new systems of caring for the aged aren't yet in place.

Yoo Tae-we, 47, a South Korean manager at a trading company that imports semiconductor components, doesn't expect his son to support him as he and his siblings did their parents. "We have to prepare for our own futures rather than depending on our children," he says.

South Korean public pensions pay an average of just \$744 a month. South Korea has the rich world's highest poverty rate for the elderly. It has one of the world's highest suicide rates for the aged, too.

China, too, will struggle to finance retirement. China pays generous pensions to civil servants and to urban workers who toiled in inefficient state-owned factories. These workers can retire early with full benefits—at 60 for men and 50 or 55 for women, depending on their job. Their pensions will prove to be a burden as China ages and each retiree is supported by contributions from fewer workers. The elderly are rapidly becoming a bigger share of China's population because of a policy begun in 1979 and only recently relaxed that limited couples to one child.

The World Bank says the cost of those pensions could eventually reach twice the size of China's annual gross domestic product. That would put the bill at more than \$16 trillion.

China is considering raising its retirement ages. But the government would likely meet resistance. "I heard that the authorities might postpone the age of the retirement, but I sure hope not, since I've already worked for almost 42 years," says Dong Linhua, 59, a former Shanghai factory worker and now a real estate investor, who owns three apartments and two small shop spaces.

China also tightly regulates investing, limiting access to assets that are more likely to generate the returns workers need to build a healthy retirement account.

"Things that you and I take for granted, like being able to invest in mutual funds or being able to buy stocks and bonds, are in their infancy in China," says Josef Pilger, leader of Ernst & Young's Asia-Pacific pension practice in Sydney, Australia. "The biggest fear the Chinese regulators have is: What if we relax investment restrictions

and we have a financial crisis? People will be on the street, saying: 'You let me play with fire, and I burned my fingers.'"

THE END OF TRADITIONAL PENSIONS

Governments aren't alone in cutting pensions. Corporations are, too. The traditional defined-benefit pensions they long had provided are vanishing. Companies don't want to bear the risks and costs of guaranteeing employees' pensions. They've moved instead to so-called defined-contribution plans, such as 401(k)s in the U.S., which shift responsibility for retirement savings to employees.

The problem with these plans is that people have proved terrible at taking advantage of and managing them. They don't always enroll. They don't contribute enough. They dip into the accounts when they need money.

They also make bad investment choices; often buying stocks when times are good and share prices are high and bailing when prices are low. Investment returns from defined-contribution plans are typically 0.76 percentage points lower than returns on defined-benefit plans, according to the consulting firm Towers Watson. That difference adds up: At a 5 percent annual return, \$100,000 becomes \$432,000 after 30 years. At 5.76 percent, it's 24 percent higher—\$537,000.

Many have raided their retirement accounts to pay bills. In the United States, 26 percent of workers with 401(k) and other defined-contribution plans take loans or make hardship withdrawals before they reach retirement, according to a study by HelloWallet, which offers online services that help people with their finances. Working Americans withdraw \$70 billion annually from retirement accounts—an amount that's 40 percent of the \$175 billion put in. Employers add an additional \$118 billion.

Retirement specialist Teresa Ghilarducci of the New School for Social Research in New York says the voluntary plans "work for a robot with an Excel spreadsheet," not for people trying to pay bills and care for children who aren't thinking decades ahead to retirement.

NUDGING WORKERS TO SAVE

Several countries are trying to force—or nudge—workers to save more for retirement.

Australia went the furthest, the soonest. It passed a law in 1993 that makes retirement savings mandatory. Employers must contribute the equivalent of 9.25 percent of workers' wages to 401(k)-style retirement accounts. (The required contributions will rise to 12 percent by 2020.) Australians can't withdraw money in their accounts before retirement.

When politicians were debating the plan, only about half of Australians supported it. Within

six months, approval rose to 85 percent. The difference: Workers started receiving statements that showed retirement savings piling up, says Nick Sherry, who helped design the program as a cabinet minister.

In October 2012, Britain required employers to start automatically enrolling most employees in a pension plan. At the start, contributions must equal at least 2 percent of earnings, half provided by employers. By 2018, contributions must rise to 8 percent, of which 3 percentage points will come from employers.

In 2006, the United States encouraged companies to require employees to opt out of a 401(k) instead of choosing to opt in. That means they start saving for retirement automatically if they make no decision.

EASING THE PAIN

Rebounding stock prices around the world and a slow rise in housing prices are helping households recover their net worth. In the U.S., retirement accounts—defined-contribution and defined-benefit plans combined—hit a record \$12.5 trillion the first three months of 2013, according to the Urban Institute. They've gone higher since.

However, net worth is merely climbing toward a level considered inadequate at its peak in 2007. Boston College's Center for Retirement Research says the recovery in housing and stock prices still leaves 50 percent of American households at risk of being unable to maintain their standard of living in retirement. That's down from 53 percent in 2010 but up from 44 percent before the Great Recession hit in 2007.

Only half of all Japanese say they've even thought about how to finance their retirement. And 63 percent are counting on getting most of their income from a government pension system that's going broke.

When they look into the future, retirement experts see more changes in government pensions and longer careers than many workers had expected:

■ Pension cuts are likely to hit most retirees but should fall hardest on the wealthy. Governments are likely to spend more on the poorest among the elderly, as well as the oldest, who will be in danger of outliving their savings.

■ Those planning to work past 65 can take some comfort knowing they'll be healthier, overall, than older workers in years past. They'll also be doing jobs that aren't as physically demanding. In addition, life expectancy at 65 now stretches well into the 80s for people in the 34 OECD countries, an increase of about five years since the late 1950s.

"My parents retired during the Golden Age of retirement," says Mercer consultant Dreger, 37. "My dad, who is 72, retired at 57. That's not going to happen to somebody in my generation."

Health & Fitness

Numbers offer complicated story of health care law

WASHING-
TON (AP)—
The government churns out tons of numbers, but here's one you won't see: 0.0002. That's the

percentage of estimated online visitors to healthcare.gov who actually signed up for coverage the first day.

Altogether, that's six people out of just over 3 million.

Not all the figures associated with the rollout of President Barack Obama's health care law are so ridiculously dreary. Three million tells a happier tale, too. That's how many young adults have been able to get coverage under their parents' plan thanks to the law's rule that people up to age 26 can do so.

A look at the health care law's early going, by the numbers:

OBAMACARE, BY ANOTHER NAME, SMELLS SWEETER

■ 81: Percentage of young Democrats who approve of the Affordable Care Act, according to December poll by Harvard's Institute of Politics.

■ 58: Percentage of young Democrats who approve of "Obamacare," which is the same thing.

PROBLEM SOLVED? NOT ENTIRELY.

■ 55 million: Estimated number of uninsured in America.

■ 31 million: Remaining number of uninsured in America in 2016, when most of the law's provisions have taken

LOCATION, LOCATION

■ 227,478: People who had signed up through the 14 state-run exchanges as of Nov. 30.

■ 137,204: People who had signed up through the federally

hold, according to federal projections.

■ 89: Percentage of all residents expected to have health insurance in 2016.

■ 91: Percentage of all residents, excluding people living in the country illegally, expected to have health insurance in 2016.

WHO'S IN?

■ 14: States that set up their own health insurance exchanges. District of Columbia also has its own exchange.

■ 36: States that refused, leaving the federal government to do it.

WHO'S IN? PART TWO.

■ 25: States that are expanding Medicaid to more people under the health care law, along with the District of Columbia.

■ 19: States that refused.

■ 6: States that haven't decided.

■ 100: Percentage of the cost of the state Medicaid expansion being paid by Washington for three years, then dropping to 90 percent.

WHO'S IN? PART THREE

■ 1 million: People who had signed up for private coverage under the federal health law by Dec. 20, up from 364,682 three weeks earlier.

■ 1.2 million: People the administration originally projected would sign up for private coverage under the law, as of Nov. 30.

LOCATION, LOCATION

■ 227,478: People who had signed up through the 14 state-run exchanges as of Nov. 30.

■ 137,204: People who had signed up through the federally

Health care deadlines

New deadlines for the Affordable Care Act:

Requirement

Sign up for coverage starting Jan. 1, 2014

Deadline

Dec. 23, 2013

Pay the first month's premium for 2014 coverage beginning Jan. 1

Dec. 31-Jan. 10*

Enroll in 2014 coverage that complies with the individual mandate

March 31, 2014

*Actual payment deadlines will vary by insurer and state; check with insurer to be certain
Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau

© 2013 MCT

run exchanges operating in 36 states by that same date.

THIS IS PROGRESS?

■ 65: Percentage of people who reported in early October that they had failed when they tried to buy insurance through the health exchanges, according to an AP-GfK poll.

■ 51: Percentage of people who reported in early December that they had failed when trying to buy from the exchanges, according to another AP-GfK poll.

A NEW FISCAL CLIFF?

■ \$95: Fine for an adult who goes without health insurance in 2014, or 1 percent of taxable income, if greater. Maximum \$285 penalty per family.

■ \$695: Fine for an adult going without health insurance in 2016, or 2.5 percent of taxable income. Up to \$2,085 per family.

■ 6 million: The number of people who could be fined in 2016 for going without insurance, according to federal researchers.

Researchers have long known it infects some CD4 cells and turns them into virus-producing factories, killing them in the process. But far more cells die without undergoing that transformation. What is going on in these "bystander" CD4 cells?

The new work provides evidence that HIV enters these cells but fails to produce a full-blown infection, and in response the cells trigger a lethal attack on themselves by the immune system.

It's "more of a suicide than a murder," Greene said. "I believe this is the major mechanism through which CD4 cells are depleted, which is the hallmark of AIDS."

The epilepsy drug, which is not on the market, blocks an enzyme that the research identified as playing a key role in that immune system attack.

Prior studies of the drug in people show it is safe, Greene said. So the researchers are talk-

ing to the drug company about testing it in people infected with HIV. No timeline for such studies has been set, he said.

Greene said if such studies are successful, the drug might be used in people whose HIV resists standard drugs. It might also be useful as a temporary treatment to keep HIV at bay for people who can't immediately get standard drugs, he said. It's even possible, he speculated, that the enzyme-blocking drug might help scientists eradicate the virus from the body.

It's not clear yet whether the enzyme-blocking approach will produce a practical therapy for HIV-infected people, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who was not involved in the work.

But the new research behind that strategy is "an important advance" toward understanding how HIV kills immune system cells, he said.

POCKETBOOK POINTERS

■ \$46,000: Individuals earning up to this amount should qualify for some level of subsidy to buy private insurance. Same for a family of four earning up to \$94,200.

■ \$328: Average estimated monthly premium, before any subsidies, for a mid-range silver plan that covers 70 percent of medical costs.

■ \$516: Estimated cost of that plan in Wyoming. Prices vary widely depending on where you live and other factors.

■ \$6,350: The most any-

one with an individual plan (whether bronze, silver, gold or platinum) will have to pay for medical care in a year, on top of premiums. Family out-of-pocket expenses are capped at \$12,700.

COMING, GOING

■ 3 million: Number of young adults up to age 26 who have stayed on their parents' health plans under the law.

■ 4 million-plus: People whose individual plans were canceled because the plans didn't measure up under the law.

The government changed rules to allow substandard plans to exist for another year; it's not known how many canceled policies will be revived. Another rules change allowed cancellation victims to sign up for bare-bones catastrophic coverage.

JUST VISITING

■ 39.1 million: Visitors to state and federal health insurance websites as of Nov. 30.

■ 880,000: Visitors to the federal website on Dec. 24, the last day to enroll for coverage effective Jan. 1. The site was able to support 83,000 simultaneous users on Dec. 23, its peak day.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

■ 7 million: People expected to sign up by the end of open enrollment season March 31, according to administration's original projections.

WEB SITE

■ \$677 million: Set aside for spending on technology through the end of October 2013.

EXIT STRATEGY?

■ \$109 million: Estimated 10-year hit to the federal budget if the law were repealed.

Drug blocks HIV in lab study, human tests planned

NEW YORK (AP)—Can an experimental drug developed to treat epilepsy block the AIDS virus? A preliminary lab study suggests it's possible, and researchers are eager to try it in people.

Scientists experimented with the drug after uncovering details of how they believe HIV cripples the immune system to bring on AIDS.

When tested in human tissues in the laboratory, the drug "works beautifully" to prevent HIV from destroying key cells of the immune system, said Dr. Warner Greene of the Gladstone Institutes in San Francisco. Those results appear in a paper by Greene and others published online Thursday by the journal *Nature*.

In that work, and a companion study published in *Science*, Greene and colleagues focus on how HIV kills vital CD4 cells of the disease-fighting immune system.

ing to the drug company about testing it in people infected with HIV. No timeline for such studies has been set, he said.

Greene said if such studies are successful, the drug might be used in people whose HIV resists standard drugs. It might also be useful as a temporary treatment to keep HIV at bay for people who can't immediately get standard drugs, he said. It's even possible, he speculated, that the enzyme-blocking drug might help scientists eradicate the virus from the body.

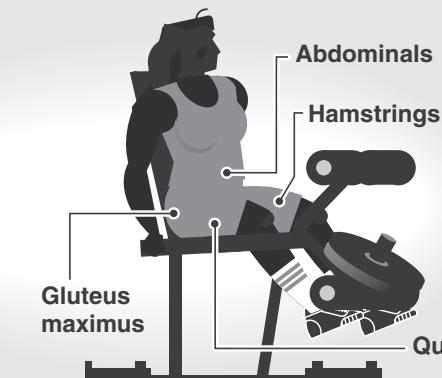
It's not clear yet whether the enzyme-blocking approach will produce a practical therapy for HIV-infected people, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who was not involved in the work.

But the new research behind that strategy is "an important advance" toward understanding how HIV kills immune system cells, he said.

Personal Trainer

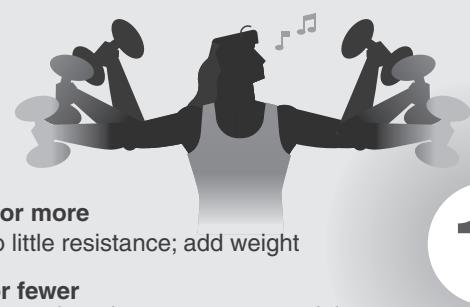
How many reps to a set?

Strength exercises are done in "sets" (series) of "reps" (repetitions); how to judge how many reps to do and how much weight to use:



Choosing the right resistance or weight

For each exercise, start with upper body and determine how many reps you can do on first try before feeling muscle fatigue



13 or more
Too little resistance; add weight

7 or fewer
Too much resistance; remove weight

Repeat for the lower body, using the target range of 10-15 reps

Source:
Bally Total Fitness

Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Paul Trap

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Life & Style

Britney Spears' Las Vegas residency a departure



In this photo provided by Caesars Entertainment, Britney Spears rehearses "Britney: Piece of Me" at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino on Thursday, Dec. 26, 2013, in Las Vegas.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Britney Spears has begun her early retirement in Las Vegas with a show that looks strikingly like the eye-popping Cirque du Soleil productions found elsewhere on the Strip.

The debut of Spears' long-term casino gig Friday kept an audience of about 4,500 on their feet for about 90 minutes.

The young-for-Vegas crowd was there for the danceable hits and the spectacle, which included acrobatics, a ring of fire, confetti, a live band, frenetic costume changes and a frequently airborne Spears.

The show's production values are unusually high for a casino residency, calling to mind the golden age of music videos. Its high-concept set pieces featured a cadre of backup dancers who danced in human-sized hamster wheels and somersaulted over the Grammy-winning star.

Spears, 32, has signed on to perform 50 shows each in 2014 and 2015 at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino.

She cuts a different figure from the typical Strip headliner. Other successful Las Vegas acts—including Shania Twain, Elton John and Celine Dion—have generally attracted an older audience. Judging from Friday's show, her fans are more likely to be found at a casino mega-club than in front of a slot machine.

Still, "Piece of Me" is not immune to nostalgia, one of the prime currencies in Las Vegas entertainment. It includes several callbacks to the 1990s and early 2000s, including plaid shirts tied around dancers' waists and a recap of the skin-tight sparkling bodysuit Spears wore in the "Toxic" music video.

Spears' younger self haunted the show, with clips of her early performances playing on huge monitors. Notably absent from those monitors, to the displeasure of some fans in the cheap seats, were any live close-ups of what was unfolding onstage.

On his way out, Shane Sode-

man, of San Diego, complained that Spears hadn't donned the sexy school girl outfit or the skintight orange jumpsuit she wore in sexier days. A version of the suit was on display in the lobby.

Speculation abounded ahead of the show that Spears would not be singing live, a claim that officials with Planet Hollywood parent company Caesars Entertainment Corp. denied.

Entertainment Programming Vice President Kurt Melien said Spears sings against a recorded track of her vocals to help her through the more physically grueling parts of the set, and add the electronic undertones that characterize many of her songs.

On Friday, all but a few performances seemed to require intense athleticism. Some audience members said it would be unfair to require Spears to perform a high-intensity workout on stage and also hit every note. Given a choice between the two, they said they'd take the choreography.

Will those who called for an A&E boycott unless Robertson returned be satisfied? Will "Duck Dynasty" fans who enjoy the Louisiana duck call-making family but were offended by Robertson's comments watch again?

The family itself, which had

threatened to withdraw if Phil wasn't welcomed back, didn't rush out with its own make-nice reaction Friday. The gay right group GLAAD, which had slammed Robertson's comments to GQ magazine, issued a critical statement despite A&E's vague allusion to the support of "numerous advocacy groups" for its reversal.

"If dialogue with Phil is not part of (the) next steps, then A&E has chosen profits over African-American and gay people—especially its employees and viewers," GLAAD said. Referring to Robertson's remark to GQ that he didn't know any

Maryn Harberg, 29, spent the night dancing in her \$139 seat, on the upper end of the \$59 to \$179 scale. She'd come to the Strip for just one night, for Britney.

"I loved it," said the beaming Boston resident. "She was totally lip-syncing, but that's what she does, she puts on a show."

Spears has lost some of the crisp precision that characterized her dancing a decade ago, but she was in constant motion during the show, allowing her backup dancers to throw her through the air, and flying around in a huge angel costume for a performance of "Everytime."

She spent downtime marching around stage and posing, banishing the specter of her disastrous 2007 MTV performance, which also took place in Las Vegas and was a career low point.

Younger divas Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus and Katy Perry lent moral support from the audience.

Casino executives say the gig may be extended if it proves a success.

'Duck Dynasty' patriarch

unhappy blacks in the pre-Civil Rights era South.

A&E said it intended to air a national public service campaign "promoting unity, tolerance and acceptance among all people."

Randy Schmidt, a "Duck Dynasty" viewer in Illinois, said he's glad to see Robertson back on the show that Schmidt admires for its "Christian values."

Although he didn't care for Robertson's comments he has a right to express his opinions, Schmidt said. He added that he's likely not the only one pleased about Robertson's return.



Robertson

ing views.

The channel's interest is in ratings and revenue, not refereeing social discord.

Will those who called for an A&E boycott unless Robertson returned be satisfied? Will "Duck Dynasty" fans who enjoy the Louisiana duck call-making family but were offended by Robertson's comments watch again?

The family itself, which had

Singing in the cold: Bruno preps for Super Bowl



In this Nov. 7, 2012 file photo, Bruno Mars performs during the 2012 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Everyone is in Bruno Mars' ear about one thing when it comes to performing the Super Bowl halftime show: How will you deal with the freezing cold?

"Everyone's putting the fear of god in me like there's going to be a blizzard," Mars said in a phone interview this month from Los Angeles, asking about the weather conditions in the New York-New Jersey area for his "research."

"I'm going to wear a bee-keeper suit, I don't know," he answered about how he will keep warm when he performs Feb. 2. "I'm not going to know until I get there ... I'm not trying to hype myself up too much."

"I know it's going to be cold and I just got to face it."

The 28-year-old pop crooner will hit the stage for the Super Bowl at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The singer, whose hits range from "Grenade" to "Locked Out of Heaven," typically performs with a full band where he sings, dances and strums the guitar onstage. Mars' performance follows Beyoncé's electrifying set earlier this year, where she danced tightly and sang powerfully, with the help of background dancers and Destiny's Child at the big game in New Orleans.

Lee Anne Callahan-Longo, the general manager of Beyoncé's production house Parkwood Entertainment, said performing in cold weather creates many challenges.

"It makes it harder to sing. It certainly makes it harder on a woman for choosing wardrobe. It can be really cold out there," she said. "But I think once you get on stage and your adrenaline gets pumping, it doesn't matter. They get in the zone. Most artists get in the zone once they start their performance. And if you're professional, you do what you need to do."

Katy Perry echoed Callahan-Longo's thoughts.

"The weather affects your vocal cords and if you're playing guitar you can't wear mittens,

you know, and your fingers are hitting these strings that are cold as well," she said. "I've been in some situations where it just like dries out your voice—the cold does. It's not where you shine your best, but you do what you have to do."

Much like his epic performance on "Saturday Night Live" that became the following week's water cooler topic as well as a ratings success, Mars understands that his Super Bowl stint is massively high profile, and could boost the pop star—who has two platinum albums, a plethora of radio hits and sold out international tours—to new heights. The singer debuted on the music scene in 2010, costarring on B.O.B.'s "Nothin on You" and Travie McCoy's "Billionaire"—multi-platinum hits Mars sang on, co-wrote and co-produced. He went on to release his debut single, "Just the Way You Are," months after, topping the charts on his own and earning his first Grammy Award. Mars' debut, "Doo-Wops & Hooligans," launched back-to-back hits and reached near double platinum status, and last year's "Unorthodox Jukebox" mirrored its success and is nominated for four Grammy Awards—including song and record of the year—to air a week before the Super Bowl.

"When we got that phone call, again, what do you say? 'Nah.' What do you say? 'Absolutely. Let's rock,'" he said excitedly. "It was something exciting for me and my (band). It wasn't too long ago when we were performing in clubs and bars and pubs, and even when I put (my first) album out, (we were) opening acts for a bunch of different artists, living in a van and traveling around and kind of putting in the work and time. It might seem fast to the outsider looking in, but you know, it's just another thing we can celebrate and I feel like as a group we all achieved it together."

"You know, performing on TV and stuff, whatever the NFL saw they dug it and that's why we got the call."

Action star Jet Li treated for overactive thyroid

HONG KONG (AP)—Jet Li says he's being treated for an overactive thyroid, but he's determined to fight the condition head-on.

The Chinese action star known for his kung fu skills discussed his diagnosis during the taping of a talent show he's judging in China.

In Tuesday's taping, the 50-year-old Li appeared to have a fuller face and heavier frame.

He said his weight has fluctuated but he's taking it all in stride. Li joked about his weight gain and said, "I'm fat, I don't have the time to lose it. It's a fact!"

He explained that exercise is not advised with the medication he's taking. An overactive thyroid, or hyperthyroidism, causes changes in a person's metabo-



In this Monday, Aug. 23, 2010 file photo, Chinese actor Jet Li smiles during a press event for announcing his new movie "Ocean Heaven," in Taipei, Taiwan.

lism and heart rate, among other symptoms, but is generally treatable with medications.

Li was diagnosed in 2010. He kept his condition under control

with medication, but it came back with a vengeance recently.

He said that he's tackling his illness head-on. "I'm just a regular guy, I'm not Wong Fei

Hung, I'm not Huo Yuan Jia (kung fu heroes he portrays on film), I'm not a hero. I'm just like you."

A martial arts champion at a young age, Li turned to acting and began showing off his kung fu skills on big screens in the 1980s.

He catapulted to fame in the '90s with the "Once Upon a Time in China" films where he portrayed martial arts master Wong Fei Hung.

His Hollywood career includes such titles as "Lethal Weapon 4," "Romeo Must Die" and more recently "The Expendables 2."

Li confessed there are times he's unsure if he's able to carry on with work, but he's determined. "I'm in pain, but I'm not suffering. I'm happy," he said.

Tightrope walker who crossed Niagara Falls dies

PARIS (AP)—The celebrated French tightrope walker and chair-balancer known as Henry's, who balanced high above the Alps, Niagara Falls and for months over a supermarket in his hometown, has died.

Maurice Vincent, a senator and the mayor of Saint-Etienne, said in a statement that Henry's died Friday.

Henry's, whose real name was Henri Rechattin, once walked along the cable that carries cable cars to the summit of the Aiguille du Midi in the Alps. Vincent said Henry's once balanced above the Grand Canyon and that such international stunts helped promote Saint-Etienne around the world.

At Niagara Falls in 1975, he balanced on a platform attached to a motorcycle that his friend rode across the cable over the Whirlpool Rapids, all while Rechattin's wife hung from a pole he carried on his shoulders, according to the Niagara Falls Public Library.

Several times, atop tall buildings or overlooking precipices,



French tightrope walker Henri Rechattin walks over the Saint-Remy sur Durolle countryside in central France, in this July 16, 1967 file photo, as he breaks the specialty's world record of the time.

he sat on a chair balanced on its back legs, which were perched on upside down glasses which in turn sat on another chair, also propped up on glasses.

One such stunt was in 1996 on the edge of the roof of Moscow's Rossiya Hotel, 44 meters (144 feet) up.

But Rechattin is perhaps most famous in France for spending

six months in 1973 on a cable 20 meters (66 feet) above a supermarket in Saint-Etienne. Photos from the stunt show that while he often walked along the wire, he could also sit on a small platform balanced on the cable. In one photo, he is sitting down to shave.

He was 82, according to French press reports.

Balloting begins! Oscar nominations voting starts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Oscar voters, start your ballots.

Voting begins Friday for 2014's Academy Awards nominees. Members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences are invited to cast secret ballots for their favorite film work from the past year until Jan. 8, 2014.

The academy is offering electronic voting for the second consecutive year. It announced last week that 289 feature films are eligible for best-picture consideration.

Nominations for the 86th Academy Awards will be announced Jan. 16.

Ellen DeGeneres will host the ceremony when the Oscars are presented on March 2.

Surfers dressed as Santa Claus gather in Florida

COCOA BEACH, Florida (AP)—More than 210 surfers dressed as Santa Claus, elves and snowmen were surfing the Christmas Eve waves off central Florida's Atlantic coast.

Florida Today reports that when Cocoa Beach Mayor Dave Netterstrom took in the view from the sand Tuesday, he declared the fourth-annual gathering "the largest surfing Santa event on the planet."

Organizer George Trosset says he may move the holiday event to downtown Cocoa Beach next year to accommodate growing crowds. He started the tradition in 2009 with a few family members after seeing a television commercial featuring people surfing in Santa Claus attire.



In this Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2013 photo, Shaylona Kirk, of Cocoa Beach, left, peeks at the camera during the photo shoot of over 210 surfers dressed as Santa Claus, elves and snowmen at the fourth annual "surfing Santas" event in Cocoa Beach, Fla.

More friends joined them the following year, and in 2012,

nearly 160 surfers participated. Trosset says the event "has gone

from being a little family party to being a community event."

Woman's high salary reveals boyfriend's low self-esteem

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 23-year-old woman in a fantastic relationship with a man two years older. I could fill volumes with all the things I love about him. My problem is I make more money than he does. He earns a good living and is a hard worker, but he constantly says things like, "You're going to leave me for someone who makes more money than I do," or, "Your parents don't think

I'm good enough for you because I didn't go to college."

Abby, my parents don't care about that. They adore him because they see how happy he makes me. I don't care that I earn more. The way I look at it, eventually when we're married, our finances will be combined.

I have tried telling him this and convincing him that I love him for all his qualities, but he doesn't believe me. Is there anything else I can do?

HEAD OVER HEELS IN PORTLAND, ORE.

DEAR HEAD OVER HEELS: The problem isn't that you make more money than your boyfriend does; it's that he doesn't have enough self-confidence to believe that someone could love him just for himself. Some men feel that in order for them to affirm their masculinity, they have to bring in the bigger paycheck.

You might point out that when he says those things, it hurts your feelings because it implies that all you care about is money, you have poor values and are for sale to the highest bidder. But until HE is able to recognize all that he has to offer, there's nothing more you can do.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I are starting to hate our older daughter. After dropping out of college, she moved home to "save some money." Since then, she has lived as she pleases. She isn't saving money and is contributing nothing toward her support.

We have given her a deadline to move out and will hold to it. But her slovenly ways, sullen attitude and disregard for rules have created such a toxic atmosphere we're afraid our relationship is forever changed. Abby, this is not the daughter we raised! What do we do?

SAD DAD OUT WEST

DEAR SAD DAD: Your letter raises more questions than I can answer. Why did your daughter drop out of college? Does she have a job? Where is her money going if she's not saving it or contributing to the household? Does she have a drug problem? Emotional problems?

If this isn't the girl you raised, there has to be a reason for it. Rather than hating her for her behavior, what you should be doing is finding out what's causing it.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I was invited with four close friends to a "goodbye" tea at the request of a dying friend. Her four children were hostesses and had issued the phone call invitation the day before.

My friend is still alive. Is it necessary and proper to write a thank-you, and to whom?

BEWILDERED IN PHOENIX

DEAR BEWILDERED: Write a short thank-you note to the person who called you. If your friend is still well enough to understand it, write another one to her, expressing that you appreciated being able to spend the time with her and that you were honored to have been invited. That's what I'd do.

■■■

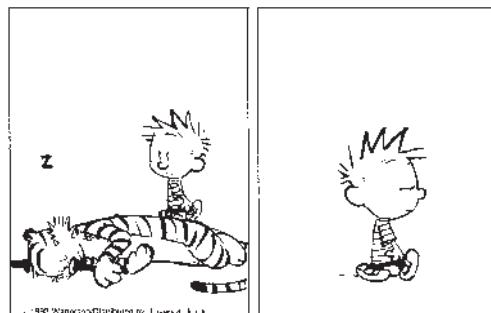
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

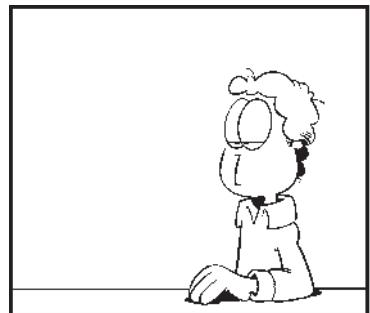
Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson



Garfield®



By Jim Davis



Adam@home



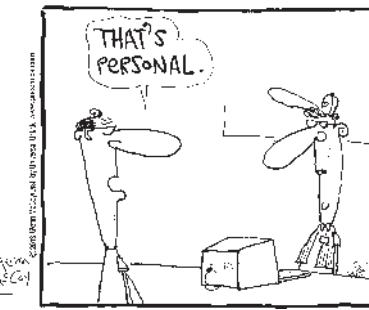
By Bryan Basset



The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy



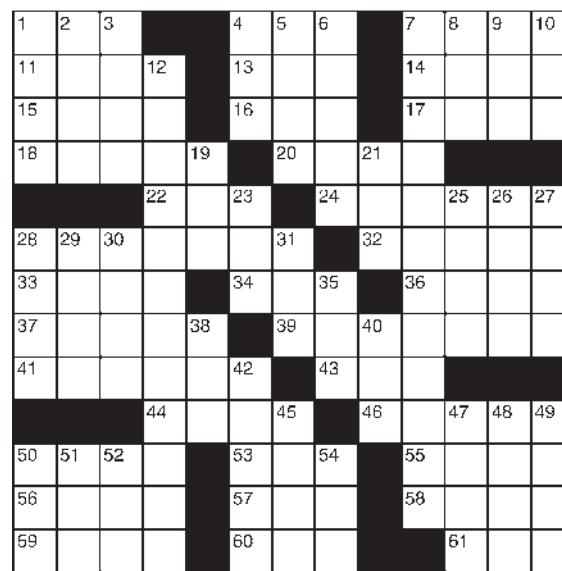
CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37	Colum-	60	Levy	12	Factory
1	Cash	bus'	61	Parcel of	19	apparatus
2	dispenser	birthplace	20	land	21	and on
3	4	Donkey	41	Come	"Help!"	
4	5	7	42	forth	23	Youngster
6	and	43	44	Sphere	25	Voice of
7	that	45	Group of	26	Shrek's	
8	11	46	quail	27	Fiona	
9	Stylish	47	Gun the	28	Agents,	
10	G.I. Jane,	48	engine	29	for short	
11	e.g.	49	50	Stare	30	reverence
12	13	51	52	stupidly	31	Author
13	Basin	53	54	Charged	32	Nicholas
14	accessory	55	56	bit	33	"The Talk"
15	16	57	58	Queue	34	If I may
16	Start	59	60	Mid-	35	interrupt
17	over	61	62	eastern	36	...
18	Historic	63	64	airline	37	Region
19	time	65	66	57	38	Long
20	Contact	67	68	Holly-	39	sandwich
21	—	69	70	wood	40	35
22	Keeping	71	72	trickery,	41	Crony
23	watch	73	74	for short	42	38
24	on	75	76	58	43	One's
25	20	77	78	"I did it!"	44	years
26	As well	79	80	59	45	40
27	Cistern	81	82	Dissolve	46	Blunder
28	22	83	84	a day	47	Medita-
29	Talcum,	85	86	Solution time: 25 mins.	48	tive
30	for one	87	88	practice	49	practice
31	28	89	90	47	50	Test tube
32	Garden	91	92	48	51	48
33	pavilions	93	94	49	52	Loosen
34	32	95	96	50	53	49
35	Steps	97	98	Jewel	54	Organic
36	over a	99	100	55	55	fuel
37	fence	101	102	56	56	50
38	Captain's	103	104	57	57	51
39	greeting	105	106	58	58	Pub order
40	33	107	108	59	59	52
41	Bath	109	110	60	60	Crony
42	site	111	112	61	61	54
43	34	113	114	62	62	Put the
44	Pad-	115	116	63	63	kibosh on
45	locked	117	118	64	64	

Friday's answer

12-30



For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

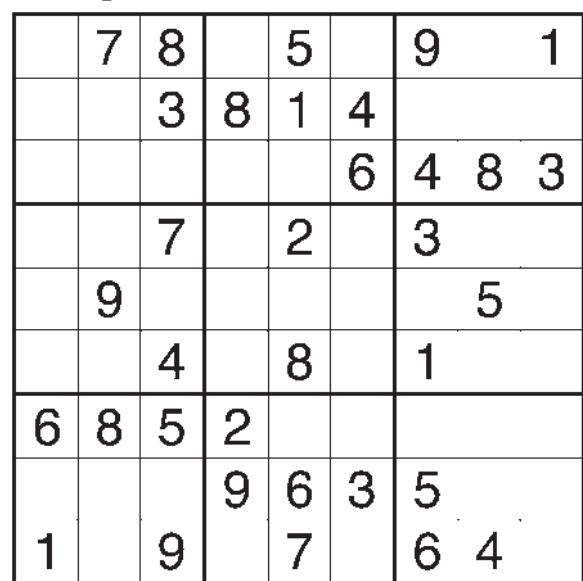
STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

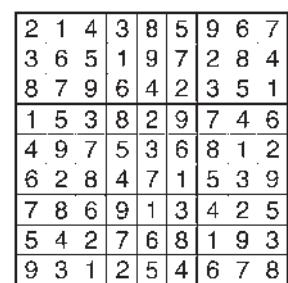
By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's SUDOKU Answer



12/30

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

OCEAN CURRENTS

Solution: 9 letters

G	T	R	A	C	K	S	G	H	S	S	M
N	S	E	V	A	W	R	R	T	I	S	E
O	A	H	E	I	E	U	R	L	O	O	C
R	F	P	N	B	S	A	O	C	L	I	M
T	I	D	E	S	E	I	O	N	S	S	H
S	S	C	E	K	R	L	Y	E	O	N	G
H	I	R	M	O	D	O	D	P	L	I	A
O	P	A	C	I	F	I	C	O	A	S	T
R	N	G	A	T	R	A	D	R	A	I	E
E	O	R	R	W	R	O	F	L	A	B	P
L	O	A	C	A	B	B	E	L	I	N	G
I	S	V	T	R	E	T	A	W	O	N	I
N	N	I	I	M	A	E	R	T	S	W	I
E	O	T	C	L	O	C	K	W	I	S	A
W	M	Y	G	R	E	N	R	U	T	S	O

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Last Friday's Answer: Knighted
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit wonderword.universalclick.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

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Bosh carries Heat, minus James, past Blazers



PORTRALD, Ore. (AP)—Chris Bosh made his case: He wanted to go for the win.

So with 0.5 seconds left Saturday night, he sank the 3-pointer that gave Miami a 108-107 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers. Playing without LeBron James because of injury, the Heat acquiesced to Bosh's wishes on the play that won it.

"My call at the end of the game was much more conservative," coach Erik Spoelstra said. "I drew something up to get him on the move and he said, 'No, I want it for the 3.' So he overruled it and became a prophet."

Bosh finished with a season-high 37 points and added 10 rebounds to hand Portland its third loss at home this season.

Wesley Matthews scored 23 points for the Blazers, who had won seven of eight.

James injured his right groin and tweaked his left ankle Friday night in a 108-103 overtime loss at Sacramento that snapped Miami's six-game winning streak. He stayed in the game and finished with 33 points, eight rebounds and eight assists.

The four-time NBA MVP warmed up before Saturday's game but was declared inactive about an hour before the opening tip. Michael Beasley started in his place.

The Blazers held a 94-91 lead halfway through the final quarter, but Bosh hit a 3-pointer to tie it at 96. He made another 3 that brought Heat players on the bench—including James—to their feet as Miami pulled in front 101-98 with 2:03 left.

LaMarcus Aldridge's layup narrowed it to 103-102 with 1:08 to go before Nicolas Batum made all three of his free throws after he was fouled beyond the arc by Dwyane Wade.

Wade dunked to tie it at 105 with 26 seconds left, but the Heat fouled Batum with 7.7 seconds to go and he made both shots, setting up Bosh's 3-pointer when Wade drove right and kicked it back to him well beyond the arc.

Bosh wanted that 3.

"In that situation I wanted to go for the win," Bosh said. "It was just how I felt at the moment. So we kind of changed it where Dwyane had an opportunity downhill and if he got double-teamed I was behind him for the jumper."

Spoelstra praised Bosh for taking the lead in James' absence.

"He was terrific tonight, a true two-way player," the coach said. "He took the challenge for the majority of his minutes on one of the premier players in this league (Aldridge) and then had to shoulder a big-time offensive load. That takes incredible stamina but also the skill set that he put on display tonight on both ends of the court."

Wade called the victory the Heat's first "signature win of the year."

Aldridge, who finished with 22 points, missed a short jumper at the buzzer.

"It was obviously a disappointing loss. I was disappointed that we put ourselves in that position at the end of the game where it had to come down to a couple of plays at the end," Trail Blazers coach Terry Stotts said. "Give Miami credit. We knew that they had a lot of good players and with James out, they had a lot of good players that can make plays and they did."

Beasley appeared to get hurt himself early in the second half and came off the floor limping. He appeared in obvious pain while being attended to on the bench, but later returned to play.

The two-time defending NBA champions also were without Chris Andersen (sore back), but Ray Allen (right knee tendinitis) and Wade (rest), who both missed the game against the Kings, were back in the lineup.

James was the only Miami player to start the team's first 29 games. Listed as day-to-day, he'll celebrate his 29th birthday on Monday when the Heat play at Denver to wrap up a four-game trip.

Pacers 105, Nets 91

In Indianapolis, Paul George scored 24 points and Lance Stephenson added 23 to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 105-91 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Saturday night.

George Hill finished with 21 points for the Pacers, who put five players in double figures and pulled away with a third-quarter burst.

Roy Hibbert scored 11 and David West 10 for Indiana, which leads the Eastern Conference at 23-6. Stephenson also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Paul Pierce scored 18 points for the Nets.

Celtics 103, Cavaliers 100

In Boston, Jeff Green and Jordan Crawford each scored 19 points to help Boston hold off Cleveland.

Brandon Bass added 15 points and a game-saving block in the closing seconds for the Celtics, who led by 19 entering the final quarter and held a 10-point edge with 4½ minutes to play.

Before the game, the Cavaliers suspended center Andrew Bynum indefinitely for conduct detrimental to the team and banned him from all team-related activities. Bynum, who signed a two-year, \$24 million contract with the Cavaliers in July, did not travel with the club to Boston and it's likely he has played his final game for Cleveland.

Avery Bradley added 18 points and eight rebounds for Boston, which snapped a three-game skid. Bass also had eight boards.

Kyrie Irving scored 32 points for the Cavaliers, who lost their fourth straight.



leans. Anthony Davis added 18 points and 16 rebounds.

Timberwolves 117, Bucks 95

In Milwaukee, Kevin Love had 33 points and 15 rebounds for his sixth straight double-double, and Minnesota climbed back to .500 by routing Milwaukee.

Kevin Martin scored 20 points, Nikola Pekovic added 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Love hit four of Minnesota's 11 3-pointers. Perimeter defense was once again a huge problem for the Bucks, who have allowed opponents to hit at least 10 3s in seven consecutive games.

Khris Middleton scored 23 points for Milwaukee on 10-of-20 shooting. Larry Sanders had nine points and 10 rebounds in 33 minutes, his first start since missing seven weeks following right thumb surgery.

The Bucks fell to an NBA-worst 6-24, while Minnesota evened its record at 15-15.

Suns 115, 76ers 101

In Phoenix, Miles Plumlee scored a career-high 22 points to go with 13 rebounds, and Phoenix bounced back from its worst loss of the season to beat Philadelphia.

Goran Dragic added 21 points and Eric Bledsoe 20 for the Suns, who have won nine of 11. Marcus Morris made three fourth-quarter 3-pointers and scored 18.

Thaddeus Young scored 30 points, Michael Carter-Williams 27 and Tony Wroten 22 for the 76ers, who lost their 13th road game in a row and have dropped nine of 10 overall.

Evan Turner, Philadelphia's leading scorer at 19.3 points per game, sat out to rest his sore right knee.

Phoenix lost 115-86 at Golden State on Friday night. The 76ers hadn't played in a week and had been in Arizona since Thursday.

Plumlee left the game to get seven stitches for a cut on his chin in the second half but returned.

Clippers 98, Jazz 90

In Los Angeles, Blake Griffin scored a season-high 40 points, overcoming early foul trouble and a career-worst eight turnovers to lead Los Angeles past Utah.

Griffin made his first 12 free throws and finished 14 for 17 from the foul line. The three-time All-Star, who entered this season a 61.1 percent career free throw shooter, has made 80.6 percent of his attempts over his last eight games and raised his season mark to 70 percent.

Chris Paul had 21 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Clippers, who were coming off a pair of narrow road losses to Golden State and Portland—the latter in overtime. They haven't lost three in a row yet this season.

Enes Kanter had 17 points off the bench for the Jazz, including a 16-footer with 4:20 remaining—their last field goal of the game.

Raptors 115, Knicks 100

In Toronto, Kyle Lowry had a season-best 32 points and 11 assists, Terrence Ross made a career-high seven 3-pointers and Toronto beat short-handed New York for the second straight night.

Lowry came within two rebounds of a triple-double and Ross had 23 points as Toronto won for the fourth time in five games. DeMar DeRozan added 20 points for the Raptors, who overcame a 12-point deficit in the second half to beat the Knicks 95-83 at Madison Square Garden on Friday.

Toronto finished with a season-high 15 baskets from beyond the arc.

Amare Stoudemire scored 20 of his 23 points in the second half for the Knicks, who lost for the fifth time in seven games. Leading scorer Carmelo Anthony sat out his third straight with a sore left ankle.

Brandon Bass added 15 points and a game-saving block in the closing seconds for the Celtics, who led by 19 entering the final quarter and held a 10-point edge with 4½ minutes to play.

Wizards 106, Pistons 82

In Washington, John Wall had 20 points and 11 assists, Marcin Gortat added 16 points and Washington routed Detroit.

Trevor Ariza and Bradley Beal each had 15 points for Washington, which snapped a three-game home losing streak. The Wizards have won four of five overall.

One night after their worst defeat of the season, a 22-point loss at Minnesota, the Wizards never trailed, pulling away late in the first half en route to their biggest win.

Greg Monroe scored 14 for the Pistons, who have dropped four of five.

Hawks 118, Bobcats 116, OT

In Atlanta, Paul Millsap had a season-high 33 points, Lou Williams scored 10 of his season-best 28 in overtime and Atlanta rallied to beat Charlotte.

Al Jefferson had 24 points and a season-high 23 rebounds, and Gerald Henderson added 22 points for the Bobcats.

Playing their first game since leading scorer and rebounder Al Horford sustained a torn pectoral muscle, the Hawks trailed by 14 after Henderson hit a 20-foot fadeaway jumper with 4:19 left in the third quarter.

But Atlanta, which has won two straight and five of six, rallied to force overtime when backup center Pero Antic made a 3-pointer off one leg from the right wing with 3.1 seconds left in regulation.

Jeff Teague finished with 20 points and nine assists for the Hawks. Mike Scott added 18 points, and Millsap pulled down 13 rebounds.

Mavericks 105, Bulls 83

In Chicago, Monta Ellis had 22 points and Dallas took control early in coasting to a victory over Chicago.

Dirk Nowitzki and Vince Carter added 18 points apiece for the Mavericks, who led by as many as 32 while bouncing back from a home loss to San Antonio on Thursday.

Joakim Noah led Chicago with 20 points and 10 rebounds, but the Bulls had their modest two-game winning streak snapped. Carlos Boozer and Taj Gibson each added 13.

The Mavericks took command with a 15-2 run to end the first quarter. Carter, who entered

just before the surge started, had seven points during the spurt.

Grizzlies 120, Nuggets 99

In Memphis, Tennessee, Zach Randolph scored 20 points and Memphis got 62 points from its bench against Denver.

Six Grizzlies finished in double figures and Memphis shot 52 percent while sending the Nuggets to their sixth straight loss. Ed Davis led the reserves with 17 points, and Jerryd Bayless had 15. Mike Conley and James Johnson scored 14 apiece, and Mike Miller added 11.

The 120 points were a season high for Memphis, and only two less than the most the Nuggets have allowed in a game this season.

Ty Lawson led Denver with 20 points and eight assists.

Rockets 107, Pelicans 98

In Houston, Dwight Howard had 24 points and 17 rebounds, and James Harden scored 11 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter in Houston's comeback win over New Orleans.

Chandler Parsons added 19 points and seven rebounds, and Terrence Jones had 17 points and eight rebounds to help the Rockets win their third straight game and snap New Orleans' winning streak at two.

Jeremy Lin scored all 10 of his points in the fourth quarter, and the Rockets made three of five 3-point attempts in the quarter after going 3 of 21 from long range in the first three periods.

Houston was 25 of 32 from the free throw line, while the Pelicans went 6 of 8.

Ryan Anderson had 22 points and 12 rebounds for New Or-

Rangers introduce outfielder Shin-Soo Choo

 **ARLINGTON, Texas** (AP)—Shin-

Soo Choo will be the leadoff hitter for the Texas Rangers in an offense they feel they have successfully remade this offseason.

Choo was formally introduced Friday, nearly a week after agreeing to a \$130 million, seven-year deal.

“It was a perfect fit,” general manager Jon Daniels said. “His skill set, his personality, his personal goals and desires really line up perfectly with ours and what our club needed. ... He’s really been one of the most productive offensive players in the game for a period of time now.”

The 31-year-old South Korean outfielder has a .288 career average and .389 on-base percentage in 853 major league games for Seattle (2005-06), Cleveland (2006-12) and Cincinnati (2013).

Choo has at least 20 homers and 20 stolen bases three times, including last season when he started 150 games in center field and was the primary leadoff hitter for the Reds in his only year there.

With numerous teams interested during free agency, Choo said he was looking for a winning team and somewhere his wife and three young children would be comfortable.

“The Texas Rangers were the best fit for me,” Choo said. “It



Shin-Soo Choo, of South Korea, answers questions during a news conference announcing his signing to the Texas Rangers, Friday, Dec. 27, 2013, in Arlington, Texas. AP

was very easy to pick.”

Agent Scott Boras called it a “tremendous baseball fit” for both sides.

Texas last month acquired five-time All-Star first baseman Prince Fielder from Detroit in a trade for second baseman Ian Kinsler.

Only Mike Trout (564) and Miguel Cabrera (562) have reached base more than last two seasons than Choo (556) and Fielder (542).

“We talked early on about our desire to remake our offense,

both in personnel, but also equally importantly in style,” Daniels said. “We feel very good about what we’ve been able to accomplish to this point.”

Texas missed the playoffs for the first time in four years and scored only 730 runs, its fewest in a non-strike season since 1992.

Choo was presented jersey No. 17, which had been worn by free-agent slugger Nelson Cruz, the 2011 AL championship series MVP who hit 27 home runs with 76 RBIs in 109

games for Texas last season. Cruz was suspended 50 games after Major League Baseball’s investigation into a Florida clinic accused of distributing banned performance-enhancing drugs, but returned to play in the AL wild-card tiebreaker game the Rangers lost.

The addition of Choo, whose salary will average about \$18.6 million per season, also lessens the likelihood of Texas being serious bidders for Japanese star pitcher Masahiro Tanaka.

Rangers co-owner Bob Simp-

son said the team is “comfortable where we are in terms of financial commitment” and that “Tanaka would be a tough thing.”

The Texas payroll is expected to be over \$130 million next season. When the ownership group took over during the 2010 season, the same year the Rangers went to the first of consecutive World Series, the payroll was less than \$60 million.

Choo’s deal is the third-richest this offseason, behind only Robinson Cano (\$240 million, 10 years from Seattle) and Jacoby Ellsbury (\$153 million, seven years from New York Yankees). Choo will make \$14 million in 2014 and 2015, \$20 million

Chiefs, 49ers get 8 players each for Pro Bowl



HONOLULU

(AP)—Kansas City and San Francisco will have plenty of clout in Honolulu if they don’t make it to New Jersey for the Super Bowl.

The NFL revealed Friday that the Chiefs and 49ers each had eight players voted into the Pro Bowl, including running backs Jamaal Charles of Kansas City and Frank Gore of San Francisco.

Denver quarterback Peyton Manning was selected to his 13th Pro Bowl after receiving the most votes among fans, 1.43 million. New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees was second among fans with 1.2 million votes.

The NFL combines votes from fans, players and coaches to determine 86 of 88 Pro Bowl players; the other two players are long-snappers selected by Pro Bowl coaches. Voting ended Thursday.

Under a new format this year, NFL greats Jerry Rice and Deion Sanders will divvy up the players in a two-day draft before the Jan. 26 game. Offensive and defensive players with the most votes who don’t make it past the divisional playoff round will serve as active player captains.

Charles said Friday night on a reveal show on the NFL Network that he should be picked first.

“I think I got the best skill-set of anybody on the roster,” Charles said. “I think I can play wide receiver and then put the ball in my hand, also. The only thing I can’t do is throw the ball.”

Carolina linebacker Luke Kuechly said he’ll be fine wherever he’s picked.

“I don’t know, you got to get the guy who scores points,” he said.

The schoolyard-style selections mean it’s likely teammates will be forced to play on opposite sides. Players on the winning team will earn \$53,000 while the losers will get \$26,000 under the collective bargaining agreement.

from 2016-18, and \$21 million the last two years of the deal. There is also a limited no-trade clause and award bonuses, the largest being \$250,000 for being selected AL MVP.

Rangers manager Ron Washington plans to play Choo in left field and utilize him at the top of the batting order. He had a .423 OBP with Cincinnati and scored 107 runs last season.

“He’ll be the kind of guy to come back to the dugout and let everyone know exactly what that pitcher is doing. ... That’s old-school baseball right there,” Washington said. “He’s a young man bringing old-school values, and that’s what I like the most.”

Posting period for Japanese pitcher Tanaka starts

NEW YORK (AP)—The bidding for Japanese star pitcher Masahiro Tanaka has begun.

All 30 major league teams were notified that the 30-day period to sign the star 25-year-old right-hander began at 8 a.m. EST Thursday, according to MLB spokesman Michael Teevan. Clubs have until 5 p.m. on Jan. 24 to attempt to reach an agreement with the ace.

If Tanaka and a major league team come to terms, that franchise is required to pay his Japanese club, the Rakuten Eagles, a posting fee, now capped at \$20 million under a deal reached two weeks ago between MLB and Nippon Professional Baseball. Under the old, no-limit system, the Texas Rangers paid over \$50 million for the right

to negotiate with Yu Darvish before the 2012 season.

Tanaka will be represented by Excel Sports Management during the process. Other Excel Sports clients include Dodgers two-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw and Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter.

Rakuten rejected the new posting system but was outvoted in balloting by Japan’s 12 teams. The Japan Series champion then said it was going to retain Tanaka, whose rights it holds for two more seasons.

Eagles President Yozo Tachibana, however, changed course Wednesday, saying that Tanaka deserved a chance to play in the majors. Tachibana cited Tanaka’s 24-0 regular-season record with a 1.27 ERA and his “outstanding contribution to the team” over seven

seasons as reasons for choosing to post the player.

A day after throwing a complete game in a Game 6 loss in the Japan Series, Tanaka saved the clincher, bringing the first league championship to the team based in Sendai, which is still recovering from the devastation wrought by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Several major league teams argued that under the system established in 1998, only the richest franchises could afford to bid on the right to sign star Japanese players still under club control. The new system levels the process—and also means the player could get a contract around \$100 million.

The New York Yankees are among several teams in need of top-line starting pitching.

Under the rules of the three-year agreement, starting with

the day after a player is posted and continuing for 30 days, any team willing to pay the fee may attempt to sign the player. A club pays the posting fee only if it signs the player, and the fee is then submitted in installments, with the timing dependent on the amount.

A player who is not signed may not be posted again until the following Nov. 1.

During the previous agreement, Boston obtained Dai-suke Matsuzaka from the Seibu Lions before the 2007 season for \$51,111,111 and agreed to a \$52 million, six-year contract. Texas got Darvish from the Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters before the 2012 season for \$51,703,411 and gave him a \$56 million, six-year deal. Darvish finished second in this year’s AL Cy Young Award voting.

batting .319 with 19 home runs and 42 RBIs. He helped them reach the NL championship series, where they lost to St. Louis, and was runner-up for the Rookie of the Year award.

Puig signed a \$42 million, seven-year contract in June 2012, a record for a Cuban defector. He received a \$12 million signing bonus and made \$2 million last season.

Florida police: Puig charged with reckless driving

NAPLES, Fla. (AP)—Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig was arrested on a reckless driving charge for the second time this year after officers clocked him going 110 mph in a 70 mph zone.

A news release from the Florida Highway Patrol said a white Mercedes driven by the 23-year-old Cuban defec-

tor was pulled over around 9:30 a.m. Saturday. Authorities said Puig was arrested and charged with reckless driving and taken to the Collier County Jail for processing. Puig lives in the Miami area during the offseason.

Dodgers spokesman Joe Jarick declined to comment on Puig’s latest arrest.

In April, when he was still in the minors, Puig was charged with reckless driving and speeding after Chattanooga, Tenn., police clocked him going 97 mph in a 50 mph zone. The charges were dismissed in November after Puig completed community service in Los Angeles.

Puig was an instant sensation with the Dodgers last season,

San Francisco linebacker NaVorro Bowman said he thinks it would be weird to have to tackle Gore or Pro Bowl tight end Vernon Davis.

“I might not tackle him,” Bowman said. “Just let him score and get his yards or whatever. Yeah, that’d be weird because that hasn’t happened since training camp.”

Rice and Sanders playfully bantered about possible selections, with Sanders saying he wanted players on his roster who haven’t been to many Pro Bowls.

“If you have five years or more, don’t even worry about it I’m not going to pick you,” Sanders said. “Go play for Jerry.”

Rice said later: “You’re trying to bait me—that’s not going to happen.”

Seattle cornerback Richard Sherman received 552,600 votes by fans, the most for any defensive player. Houston defensive end J.J. Watt had just under 410,000 fan votes.

San Francisco is set to send eight players to the game for the second year in a row, though its players missed the game earlier this year because they made the Super Bowl, losing to Baltimore.

Kansas City’s eight selections are up from six last year. The Chiefs are 11-4 this year—up from 2-14 last year—and the No. 5 seed in the AFC playoffs heading into a largely meaningless game for them against San Diego on Sunday.

Chiefs coach Andy Reid said Friday he has never been big on Pro Bowl selections.

“I’m happy for the guys when and if they make it. I’m proud of them for it,” Reid said. “But we don’t get caught up in all of the individual accolades. (We’re) just getting ourselves ready to play.”

Manning was one of five players selected from Denver, which has a shot at putting up the most points of any team in NFL history.

All but five teams had at least one player selected. Atlanta, Green Bay, Jacksonville and both New York teams had zero players selected.

Trench Warz 17: Night of the Champions Part 2

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Trench Tech's Mylo "Bam Bam" Lassiter employs an arm choke on Team Haga's Neil "The Lionheart" Taisacan during their heavyweight title bout in Trench Warz 17: Night of the Champions held early this month at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.



Referee Tony D' Angelo checks on Korean Top Team's Kwan Ho Kwak and Marianas Elite's Derick "El Peligro" Rangamar.



Korean Top Team's Kwan Ho Kwak stretches down the canvas before battling Marianas Elite's Derick "El Peligro" Rangamar.



Trench Tech's Josh "Chaos" Duenas, top, uses an arm bar to neutralize Zalaka's Jordan "The Machine" Manglona.



Tiger Yatsui throws a wayward shot on Ryan "Ttrobz" Ngirbabul in their light heavyweight bout.



Spike 22's Rob "Shiska" Alvarez goes for a rear-naked choke on Marianas Elite's Ben Flores.



Trench Tech's T.J. Sablan, bottom, tries to hold to Tinian's Paul Ayuyu.



Zalaka's Allan "The Silver Bullet" Aguon, left, kicks Pwang's Garry "Dissa" Ray.



Marianas Elite's Ben Flores goes for a kick on Spike 22's Rob "Shiska" Alvarez.



Team D2S' Jonathan "Outlaw" Camacho hits back on Lenny "The Machine Gun" Sablan.



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28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2013

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Road Runner rules relay race



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel, Seiya Eda, Manny Aaron, Jessie James, and Tony Ichiuo of Road Runner sprint to the finish line of last Saturday's 32nd Annual Christmas Island Relay.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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The Road Runner topped last Saturday's 32nd Annual Christmas Island Relay.

Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel led up with Manny Aaron, Jesse James, Tony Ichiuo, and youth

runner Seiya Eda. The group completed the race from Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the last Command Post in Marpi in 1:26:50 and was in the driver's seat from start to finish. Road Runner's time was faster than 2012 champion Shane and the Cool Guys' mark (1:36:35).

Also eclipsing the time of last year's winner was runner-up Bombastic-52, which checked

in at 1:32:30. The runner-up squad was made up of Cesar Danao, Charlie Sendin, Noel Altamirano, and Beo Ngirchongor.

Completing the Top 3 was Cookie Monsters, which defeated Team Yolanda in a down-to-the-wire finish. Cookie Monsters' Harold



Aranda went neck-and-neck against Team Yolanda's Noni Eugenio with the sprint finish decided by only a few feet, as the former kept pushing, while the latter held back, mistakenly anticipating his foe would eventually gas out. Cookie Monsters ended up

submitting 1:34:37 against the 1:34:41 of Team Yolanda. Joining Aranda on the squad were Salvi Villanueva, Bo Palacios, Amy Sletten, and Natalie Hill. Eugenio ran with Fred Camacho, Ariel Lansangan, Dennis Titus, and Ricky Melchor.

Five teams made the 1:40:00 barrier with Taste the Rainbow registering 1:37:49. The team

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Astig Futsal, Fake Madrid share lead

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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Astig Futsal and Fake Madrid are still tied for the lead in Saipan Soccer School's 2013 U13 Co-ed Christmas Futsal Tournament after bagging twin wins over the weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.

Astig Futsal holds a 3-1-0 win-draw-loss record after earning a 5-1 win over Foot Loose in its final game in the first round last Friday and an 11-0 victory over Kanoa Mighty Orange at the start of the second and final round last Saturday. Fake Madrid also recorded a lopsided win against Kanoa Mighty Orange last Friday, 13-0, and completed the weekend sweep with a 4-2 victory against Foot Loose last Saturday.

The Foot Loose-Fake Madrid tiff was the first match played last Saturday with Sunjoon

Tenorio powering the latter to victory. He scored all four goals for Fake Madrid, while Foot Loose's two goals were courtesy of Chan Shankweiler and John Roxas.

Shankweiler put Foot Loose on the board in the first half, which ended in a tie with Tenorio making the equalizer. Tenorio then went all out in the second half with his hat-trick to give Fake Madrid its third win.

Tenorio also had a hat-trick in their 13-0 demolition of Kanoa Mighty Orange last Friday, as he and Guinevere Borja showed no mercy against their hapless foe. Borja scored five goals, recording a hat-trick early in the first half. Tenorio and Katrina Costales contributed two each in the opening 25 minutes of the game, while Lyka Sally and Logan Mister added one, as Fake Madrid rose

See ASTIG on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Astig Futsal, left, and Foot Loose players ward off each other as they fight for the ball down the sideline during their game in U13 co-ed league last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.



Rollers 1 bounces back, gets first win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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Rollers 1 made it to the win column of the 2013 Sun Palace Christmas Basketball Tournament after dominating Rollers 5, 65-50, in the curtain-raiser last Friday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Rollers 1 was in control of the match from start to finish to recover from a sorry 62-63 loss to another sister team Rollers 2 during the league's opening day last Dec. 21.



Three players scored double figures in Rollers 1's 15-point win. Joseph Yan and Mike Arriaga had 13 points each, while Jaron Ano chipped in 11. Ano dropped 9 of his total markers in the opening half to lift Rollers 1 to a 32-19 halftime advantage.

The margin never went down **See ROLLERS on Page 26**